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More Dreamcast

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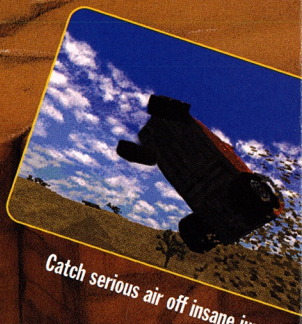
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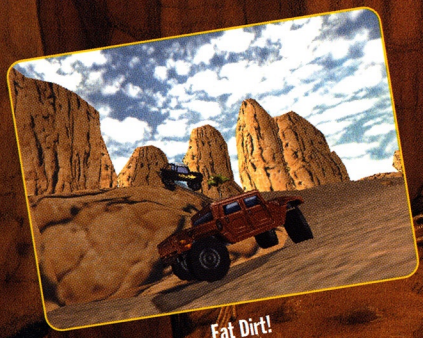

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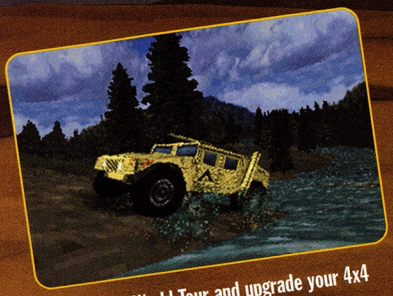
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PERFECTION

Very few videogames transcend traditional genres and deliver an entirely new interactive experience. This month, Next Generation has the privilege of reviewing not one but two that do: *Metal Gear Solid* and *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*.

It is a hopeful sign for the future of interactive entertainment that the two games have little in common other than their third-person perspectives. As current platforms age, and their user bases become younger and broader, there is certainly a temptation for developers to continue delivering what works, rather than to take the risk of innovation.

Both Nintendo and Konami have taken that risk, and it has paid off abundantly. For Nintendo, particularly, *Zelda* is a special triumph. The N64 may be a distant second to the PlayStation on the world stage (and a distant third in Japan), but it can boast the two greatest videogames ever made.

Play *Zelda* or *Metal Gear* and you will remember why you love videogames: to be immersed in another world, another reality — a place you never want to leave.





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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Next Generation shares editorial (and editors) with the U.K.-based magazine **EDGE**. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged. Letters may be edited for space, clarity, or so we look cool. Cathy is gone now, and Mike will soon follow. We have entered the time of wailing and gnashing of teeth. On the other hand, we're one month of good newsstand sales away from Bill shaving his head.

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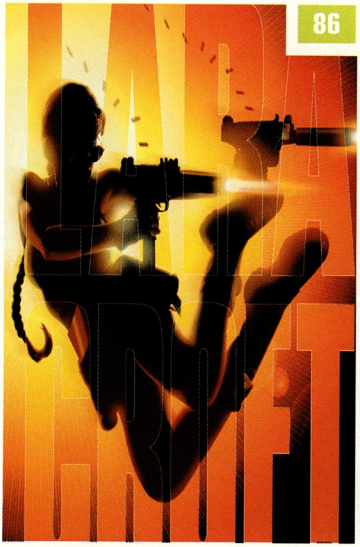
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LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

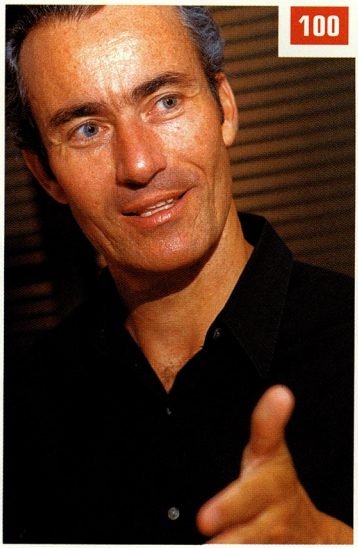
After too many years and far too much hype, *Zelda 64* has become a make-or-break title for Nintendo — indeed, N64's slim hold on the market could disappear completely if *Zelda* fails to impress the buying public. In our exclusive review, **Next Generation** digs deep to find out if it was worth the wait. Does Shigeru Miyamoto still have the magic, or is the game simply too little too late? Our three-page evaluation begins on page 114



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HOLLYWOOD

From Lara Croft to Duke Nukem, videogame characters are hot in Hollywood these days. **Next Generation** looks at what that means to movie executives and game developers alike



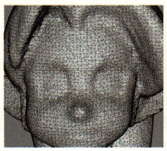
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TRIP HAWKINS

The last time we spoke to Trip Hawkins, 3DO was nearly extinct. Now it's back, and growing — **Next Generation** asks what the man who founded EA is doing today









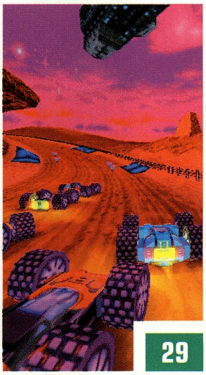
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Sega makes the Dreamcast official • What's going on with Dwango and the future of online gaming • A trip to Paraform — the latest in 3D scanning • The industry is booming







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Things are definitely heating up for 1999, and the games just keep looking better and better. Sega's Dreamcast is leading the pack with *Blue Stinger*







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FINALS: 28 games reviewed

With the holidays well under way, you need our staff of crack reviewers more than ever. This month, check out two of the best games ever made: *Zelda 64* and *Metal Gear Solid*

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Nearly a dozen videogame properties are in development as films. Why the sudden interest?

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Now that he's out of the hardware business, can he turn 3DO into the next Electronic Arts?

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Sega prepares to launch in Japan, while at home the industry is **growing like gangbusters** — and the best is yet to come

INTELLIGENCE

Game industry news and analysis

DREAMCAST GAINING MOMENTUM

As its launch date nears, Dreamcast takes shape







Controllers and add-ons are so far about what you'd expect: steering wheels and joysticks

It's official. At the Sega New Challenge Conference II in Tokyo this October, Sega set the launch date of Dreamcast in Japan for November 27. The system will cost ¥29,800 ($221 U.S.) and will launch with five titles: *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, *Sega Rally 2*, and *Godzilla Generations*, all from Sega; *July* (a *very* Japanese adventure game) from FortyFive; and *Pen Pen Triathlon* from General Entertainment.

Although this lineup may not seem impressive, it may help to recall that PlayStation launched December 3, 1994, with *Ridge Racer*, *Motor Toon GP*, and a mix of 10 other titles almost evenly split between mediocre shooters and even less memorable mahjong and pachinko games. Early PlayStation powerhouses like *Toshinden* didn't follow until almost a month later.

It is perhaps telling, then, that Sega also took the opportunity to harp on the 40 other titles that round out the current Dreamcast library, all of which are due out later in the year or by early 1999. Chief among these are Capcom's Dreamcast-exclusive *Biohazard: Code Veronica*, the tooled-up next installment in the series known as *Resident Evil* in the U.S., and *Project Berkeley* (a.k.a. *Virtua Fighter* RPG) from Yu Suzuki and AM2.



The Sega New Challenge Conference II revealed everything there is to know about the new system, from games to peripherals

Perhaps the most surprising announcement, however, was official word that Namco would indeed be developing for Dreamcast. Although Shigeru Yokoyama, Namco's head of R&D, hinted as much in **NG 47**, this confirmation is still revealing — Sega and Namco have a long history of rivalry in Japanese arcades, with *Daytona* and *Virtua Fighter* battling it out against

NEWS BITES

Magazines that seek to reinterpret game-related visual materials could find themselves in hot water. The pathetic struggle for exclusives leads some magazines to commission their own artwork based on game properties. Usually this action is a consequence of failure to secure actual artwork. Not surprisingly, game publishers that have spent millions protecting the integrity of their creations are upset. Konami of Europe issued a stern warning on the subject, following some horrible rendering of *Metal Gear Solid*: "All visual images contained within *Metal Gear Solid* are copyright of Konami. We will not tolerate any such material being reinterpreted, altered, or used in any way without our permission." **Game-Related Companies** That Hate Each Other, Number 45,982. This month's belligerent twosome is Creative Labs and Aureal Semiconductor. Not content with wringing each other's necks over various patent disputes, the sound-solution innovators are also slugging it out over advertising claims. Creative Labs' John Danforth insists: "Creative should not be required to police Aureal or its public statements to ensure their honesty. However, with its series of objective misstatements about Creative's shipping products, Aureal has simply gone too far." Lawyers are on the case. **Genre consolidation is the** obvious solution to our industry's failure to create original concepts. The two most likely bedfellows are adventures and RPGs, which have been sneaking into each other's rooms for years. SepterraCore lead designer Brian Babendererde explains: "RPGs are gaining deeper worlds and better character development and story, while

DREAMCAST TITLES IN JAPAN

November 27, 1998

Godzilla Generations (Sega)
July (FortyFive)
Pen Pen Triathlon (General Entertainment)
Sega Rally 2 (Sega)
Virtua Fighter 3tb (Sega)

1998

Blue Stinger (Sega)
Evolution (ESP)
Geist Force (Sega)
Incoming (Imagineer)
Monaco Grand Prix (Ubi Soft)
Seventh Cross (NEC)
Sonic Adventure (Sega)

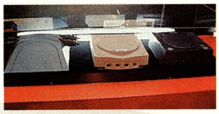
1999

Aero Dancing (CSK)
Akihabara Denno (Sega)
Biohazard: Code Veronica (Capcom)
Cho Hamaru Golf (Sega)
Climax Landers (Sega)
Cool Boarders (UEP System)
Crack 2 (Sieg)
D2 (Warp)
Digital Horse Racing (Shouei Systems)
Dynamite Robo (Warashi)
Elemental Gimmick Gear (Hudson)
Entertainment Golf (Bottom up)
Flying Dragon (Culture Brain)
Giant Glam Japanese Pro Wrestling (Sega)
Great Buggy (CSK)
Gundam (Bandai)
Harukaze Sentai V Force 2 (Bing Kids)
King of Fighters '98 (SNK)
Let's Make a Professional Baseball Team! (Sega)
Let's Make a Professional Soccer Club! (Sega)
Mahjong (Kaga Tech/Naxat)
Mercurious Pretty (NEC)
Monster Breed (NEC)
Nijiiro Tenshi (Japan Corporation)
Ohzumo Sumo Wrestling (Bottom Up)
Power Stone (Capcom)
Project Berkeley (Sega)
Puyo-Puyo (Compile)
Shienryu 2 (Warashi)
Sengoku Turb (NEC)
Virtual On: Ontario Tangram (Sega)
White Illumination (Hudson)

Meanwhile, in the U.S. on the same day as the conference, Sega also announced a number of additional domestic developers, including THQ, Accolade, Konami, Take 2, Hasbro, and Mindscape. These join Acclaim, GT Interactive, Interplay, Microprose, and Midway, which were officially brought on board as third parties at E3 this past May.

The buzz surrounding Dreamcast is building at a remarkable rate. Despite the slow fizzling of Saturn in Japan, it's apparent that Sega still commands a fair amount of brand loyalty there, and the sheer beauty of Dreamcast software like *Blue Stinger*, developed by Climax Graphics, is going a long way toward building it back up into a formidable market presence. Just how well that will translate into actual market share will be revealed in late November. NG





A number of Dreamcast prototypes were shown along with the final design (bottom)







One new title is *Project Berkeley* (misspelled in the presentation), but the big shocker was Namco

Ridge Racer and *Tekken*. Even though no actual titles were given, this disclosure, more than anything else at the conference, speaks volumes about Dreamcast's technical merits and perceived marketability.

Other tidbits at the conference included further details on Dreamcast accessories and support. Sega's online strategy is obviously an integral part of the overall plan, as company bigwigs unveiled the system's email software, called Dream Flyer, and a home page, titled Dricas, for Dreamcast customers to access through the system's built-in 33.6 kbps modem (no word yet on which browser, if any, will be supplied with the system, although given Microsoft's involvement in the Dreamcast project, Internet Explorer would be the obvious choice). A joystick, steering wheel, keyboard, and fishing reel (for use with a conversion of the popular Japanese arcade title *Get Bass*) round out the lineup.

WHAT IS IT?

Whose face is that on the cheerleader in *NFL Blitz*?









Some 45 Japanese titles have been announced, including (clockwise from upper left): *Grandia*, *Dragon Valor*, *Puyo Puyo*, and *Cool Boarders*

adventure games are now showing elements of combat and more RPGish character growth. It was only a few years ago that marketing people saw cross-genre games as the kiss of death, and few people were willing to try new things in traditional genres. Now people are excited about trying new things and breaking some of the rules. That's good for developers and gamers." **Many of us have invested** in those big-name level packs only to find they're just a bunch of consumer-designed levels scooped from the Internet and then whacked into an attractive package. But unofficial level packs could become a thing of the past. GT won its case against Micro Star, the latter having published a pack of *Duke Nukem* levels without GT's blessing. The court's judgment was that GT holds the copyrights and therefore the rights to publish any sequels and add-on packs, even if these products consist of levels created independently by consumers. **The EA game attracting** the most passion right now is the one that the company refuses to publish. *Thrill Kill* is a grossly violent fighter that ended up in EA's lap following the Westwood/Virgin deal. EA found the whole thing disagreeable and did not wish to be associated with it. Inevitably, Internet petitions are up, filled with a lot of fatuous nonsense about EA's wickedness in deciding for itself what it wishes to publish. Sign on if you must. **A month does not** go by without Activision signing some kind of bold licensing deal. This time it's an extraordinary 10-year right to publish all *Star Trek*-related games. Once the current generation has winged its way to the market, it's all Activision

HARDCORE

Some years ago my friend Brian worked at the Electronic Boutique store. One Friday when he was closing the store, we were trying to figure out how we could spend the rest of the night playing games on our limited funds. That's when we got the idea to open up a boxed Neo Geo and play it, since it was the highest-tech system at the time. Brian told me that the store television was broken so we wouldn't be able to play. Undaunted, I opened up a Sega Game Gear, got out the TV tuner attachment, and hooked the Neo Geo to it. So we played all the store's Neo Geo games on the tiny Game Gear screen. We stayed at the store until 4 a.m. and had to call security to let us out of the mall because we were locked in.

Aaron Benoliel
ishmael@neosoft.com

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IT IS ...

None other than the artist who rendered her. Who, by the way, is a man.

STARTUP WATCH: PARAFORM

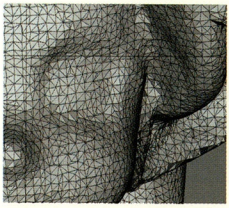
Poly Surf could **revolutionize** 3D character design

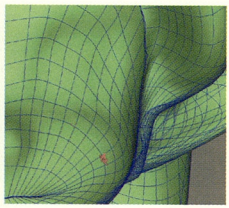
Laser scanning, using a laser and a rotating platform to create a 3D model of an object, has been around for almost 20 years. Until now, however, most laser scans generated an unstructured polygonal mesh — during scanning, the laser detected millions of points on the object in 3D space, then simply drew lines between them to get triangles. The resulting model is fine, but it can't be changed at all — if an artist wants to animate it, morph it, or even change small things, like the position of an arm on a figure, the entire model breaks. This means that 3D scanning has been almost totally useless for game developers.

Enter Paraform. Growing out of 3D research that CTO Venkat Krishnamurthy did at Stanford, Paraform promises that its new software, Poly Surf, could radically change the way things from games to toys are made. The software, which should ship in Q1 1999 for around $15,000, enables artists to quickly create easy-to-manipulate NURBS models from unstructured polygonal meshes. Artists draw patches onto the mesh and the software does the rest. "The Godzilla character from the movie took six artists working for a year to create," says John Doffing, marketing manager at Paraform. "From a model, with our software, one artist could do it in a week."



Although we scanned a model, human subjects can be scanned equally well





The unstructured mesh (left) can't be modified easily. The NURBS model (right), drawn from the mesh, animates well

The NURBS models that Poly Surf creates can then be output in any number of different resolutions and formats — a 600-polygon structured character for a game, or a native NURBS model for creating a prototype toy with CAM software. Paraform demonstrated the software for **Next Generation** on a model of Link (the finished NURBS model can be seen on our back cover). First, the model was scanned. This created a "point cloud," a volume of the sample points in 3D space. The scanning software then connected the dots to create an unstructured polygonal mesh. This mesh was loaded into Alias Wavefront, where artists Maria Burton and Paul Thuriot used Poly Surf to create a NURBS model from the unstructured mesh.

Different types of models can be generated depending on the final application. For instance, if facial animation is planned, more curves can be generated for the facial features.

For animation, the completed NURBS model is exported to an animation program, like Maya, where an IK skeletal structure and motion capture is added. (The same base NURBS model can also be exported in other forms for in-game graphics use.) The company has already signed deals with several game developers and movie studios (although NDAs prohibit it from revealing names). For more information, check out the company's web site at http://www.paraform.com. NG

until 2008. **Never let it be said** that this magazine does not cover PlayStation 2. However, because we know absolutely nothing about this strange beast, we're forced to speculate on the scuttlebutt of others. European web site Game Online baffled everyone last month with its revelation that PlayStation 2 is backward-compatible and will be among us in six months. A bemused Sony Computer Entertainment America insider said, "If it's true, then Japan hasn't told us about it." **Today's arcades are** notoriously ride-based, but good old gameplay is still fighting its corner. Not surprisingly, the impetus is coming from developers of home-based games. Namco has agreed to turn Codemasters' top-down driving game *Micro Machines 3* into an arcade unit. **The ghastly specter** of industrial espionage has cast its shadow over our industry. Top Ware has filed a suit against EA in Germany for allegedly using secrets revealed in negotiations competitively. EA had been talking to Top Ware about a range of value PC-game packages, but no deal was signed. Top Ware reckons EA then used the information it had gleaned to launch its own series of low-cost game bundles. **The fastest-growing sector** of the U.S. entertainment business is computer and videogames. At least that's the conclusion industry booster IDSA reached in its midyear report. "Interactive entertainment is going through a dynamic period, powered by mass-market penetration and exploding new technology," said Douglas Lowenstein, boss of IDSA. "Video and PC games are becoming ubiquitous worldwide as the industry races ahead to keep up with growing demand from consumers of all ages and interests." **The only thing missing** from Sega's Dreamcast launch was a delay. Sega, which likes to get things right, fixed that omission a few weeks back, announcing to a relieved world that the hardware would be delayed by five days.

VOODOO 3 SHAPES UP

Loose talk at the **recent ECTS show in London** proves revealing

Further details on what to expect from the next generation Voodoo chipset have been revealed. Speaking exclusively to **Next Generation** at ECTS, Tony Tamasi, graphics hardware product manager for 3Dfx, says, "We have a number of new innovations that we're planning for next year. Just like Voodoo and Voodoo^2, we've been listening to the game developers and they tell us they want this kind of performance, they want these kinds of new features. You can expect to see a new generation of hardware which solves a lot of the pain points for developers."

While Tamasi won't talk about Voodoo 3's exact specifications, the developers' wish list gives a good indication of what to expect. Features should include per-pixel effects, anti-aliasing, particle-system acceleration, high-order surfaces, sort-independent transparency, and improved lighting effects.

"We're going to attack a very significant percentage of those," he says. High-order surface support could mean that hardware tessellation is destined for Voodoo 3.

The recently announced version 3.0 of Glide carries features designed to support the next chipset. "It kind of lays the groundwork, at least architecturally, for some of the things we're going to be doing in our next generation hardware," says Tamasi. He adds that most of the alterations made to Glide won't be appreciated by gamers, but by developers instead. "It's cleaned up a lot of the baggage we've been carrying, things that we always meant to go back and fix," he explains. It should be easier to create a high-performance 3D title with Glide 3.0 than with version 2.0 because the newer version supports strips and fans. These are ways of sharing vertices between clusters of triangles, either in a continuous strip or a fan formation, therefore reducing the amount of data required to draw them. However, titles created using Glide 3.0 will not operate on earlier versions of the software, although it supports all 3Dfx hardware.

Meanwhile, 3Dfx was busy evangelizing its recent Banshee combined 2D/3D card at ECTS. While refusing to comment on specifics, Steve Schick, PR director for 3Dfx, claims that a number of OEM deals (in which the card is bundled with prebuilt PCs) are imminent for Banshee. The lack of a 2D capability has previously made Voodoo an unattractive option for PC manufacturers; the new combined chipset addresses this directly. In addition, Tamasi hopes that developers will put Banshee to work with authoring tools such as 3D Studio Max, and also sees potential for Internet-related applications such as VRML. NG



3Dfx has found success with add-in boards, but not yet on the motherboard

CONTROLLING PROJECT X

In a completely unexpected turn of events, VM Labs brazenly showed off a prototype Project X controller during its behind-closed-doors presentations at ECTS.

The nonfunctioning demonstration model is bulbous in style and offers many of the features expected of controllers today, including six fire buttons (although, surprisingly, no trigger support) plus D-pad and analog-stick functions.

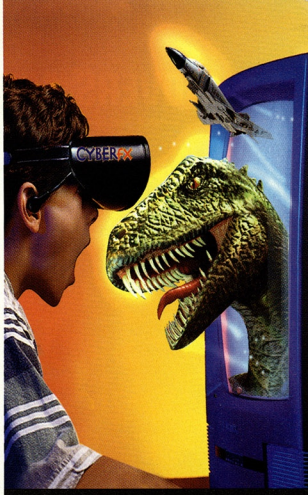
The underside of the joypad reveals a plug-in jolt pack (fashioned to fit with the curvaceous nature of the pad) and a small memory card, which fits into a separate slot.

VM Labs will not be manufacturing finished Project X DVD players, but it's clear that the company's past game experience has prompted it to take the lead in controller design. (After all, who can forget the Philips CD-i's atrocious joypads?)





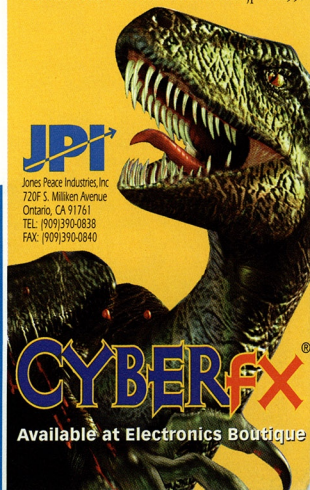
Let's face it, a hardware launch without some kind of a delay is just plain wrong. **"It is 95% certain,"** says Confounding Factor's Toby Gard," that *Galleon* will be released on Dreamcast." We thought you ought to know. **Weapons of destruction** in Acclaim's *South Park* will include a Cow Launcher, an Auto Egger, and Mr. Hankey (the Christmas Poo). It'll be in stores by the end of this year. **Bungie has initiated** a novel game-returns policy. It is inviting buyers of *Myth II* to send in old copies of competing products, in return for a $10 rebate. Games specified include *StarCraft*, *Age of Empires*, and *Total Annihilation* for PC. **South American . gamers** looking to save money have ended up paying for their cheapness. A Paraguayan operation had been churning out Nintendo 64 rip-off machines with crappy 8-bit innards. Nintendo, working alongside customs officials from that country, eventually closed the whole thing down. **Imagine Media, the company** behind this magazine, is launching a new game magazine. Called *Games Business*, it's an industry-only broadsheet aimed at the game retail channel. **Next Generation** columnist Colin Campbell is editing the biweekly, which will be launched after Thanksgiving. For more go to www.gamesbusiness.com. **Optimist of the month** goes to Chance Thomas, Sierra's senior music producer. He's petitioning the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) to add a videogame-music category to the Grammys.



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MOVERS AND SHAKERS

by **Colin Campbell**, **Next Generation**'s international correspondent

PUT UP OR SHUT UP

Let's be honest. The game industry is not as good as it should be. We've all said it, heard it, and read it a thousand times. But whenever you come across the "this industry is going to hell" speech, there remains a frustrating absence of anything resembling a suggestion of how to improve.

Even commentators, who are paid to think about such things, tend to come up with nothing more revealing than self-indulgent pseudo-revolutionary claptrap seemingly designed to castigate those people who don't fit a certain ideal. Such is the wisdom of people who would try to fix an engine with a chain saw.

If you think this collection of 600 words is going to make everything all right, think again. But as a group we can at least try to identify the problems:

- If you question the competence of people in this industry, then please identify the culprits and show how we can find excellent replacements.
- If you believe the industry is suffering from a lack of originality, please show us where this originality is hiding and how we can best charm it from the trees.
- If you believe we, as an industry and as a group of consumers, are stifling talent, please show us the oppressors so we can eradicate them. And show us those hearts where the talent is trapped.
- If you believe the economic model that underscores this business is wrong, show us a better one that is slightly more sophisticated than "make games cheaper."

This isn't an exercise in justifying the mediocrity that invades our industry and permeates all walks of life. There are answers to these questions. There must be. But if you care enough about games to complain about the status quo, you must care enough to seek solutions. Email me at colin@gamesbusiness.com.

THE SCAPEGOATS

One person who does seem to spend a lot of time ducking rotten fruit is the so-called middle manager. This individual's apparent purpose is to clog up the beautiful channel of communication between creator and consumer. Employed to aid a process, this evil functionary in fact works to the detriment of all.

But considering that the middle manager holds enough power to ruin our business, it's very difficult to find such a creature. Most in the business community would identify a middle manager as one who works either above or below them in the hierarchy. I have yet to be handed a business card announcing the title "middle manager."

If we could only find these people, and get rid of them, everything would be better, right? So, all of you in the game industry, please do us a favor. Spend a moment examining your working life. If you conclude that all the work you put in, all those meetings and dealing with shitty people and working late is, in fact, ultimately to the detriment of this business, you ought to please pack up and go away.

It doesn't matter if you are hard-working, talented, or brimming with potential. So sorry if you are passionate about your work and about this industry. You might still be surplus to requirements.

Somehow, I suspect there won't be a rush of resignations. Given that middle managers are not morons, this must be because they actually do serve a function in a complex hierarchy. And all this wank we keep hearing about clearing the channels is the simplistic rhetoric of commentators who either don't understand people or don't care about them.

Sure, we all have to work with people who are bad at their jobs. That's not going to change. The challenge here is to find the functions — not the people — that are unnecessary.

There are answers. But finger-pointing vaguely at a disparate group of people and calling for mass sackings is not one of them.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

December 19, 1923	Dr. Vladimir K. Zworykin takes a patent on the first all-electronic picture tube
December 8, 1982	Warner Communications announces that, because of a slump in Atari's videogame cartridge sales, fourth quarter earnings would be up by only 10% to 15% at best. Analysts had expected at least a 50% increase. Angry and disappointed stockholders allow Warner Communications stock to plummet by 16-3/4 points
December 12, 1988	Atari Games, looking to regain some status in the console market, files a $100 million antitrust suit against Nintendo. Atari's own subsidiary Tengen would later release unauthorized NES games
December 10, 1993	Id Software releases *Doom*, the largest-selling computer game of all time
December 23, 1994	Universal Picture's *Street Fighter*, starring Mr. Jean-Claude Van Damme as Colonel Guile and Mr. Raul Julia as General M. Bison, opens in theaters. The movie is based on the best-selling Capcom videogame by the same name. Raul, also known as Gomez Addams in two cinema remakes of "The Addams Family," died in October following a stroke
December 3,1996	Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) notes an all-time U.S. industry high software-to-hardware sales ratio of six to one. More than 200 PlayStation titles are available
December 10, 1996	Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) makes what it calls "emergency shipments" of PlayStation game consoles to the U.S. to meet demand for the holidays
December 13, 1996	Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) sells 2,077,740 PlayStation videogame consoles since the launch in that region of the world
December 28, 1996	Nintendo of America claims that sales of Nintendo 64 will topple 1.6 million by year's end and promises that 500,000 to 700,000 new units will be shipped to North America between January 1 and March 31, 1997
December 1, 1997	L4 Software launches Mr. Don Thomas' I.C. When as a Web-based chronology of the history of videogames and computers
December 9, 1997	A television cartoon triggers simultaneous convulsions in more than 618 children throughout Japan. The cartoon, "Pokemon," is based on the popular videogame by Nintendo for Game Boy. The episode includes a scene with an explosion of a "vaccine bomb" to destroy a computer virus, followed by Picachu's eyes reflecting the explosion for about five seconds. The fire department stated that children suffered convulsions, vomiting, irritated eyes, and other symptoms
December 17, 1997	Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) files suit against six alleged software counterfeiters that have done business over the Internet

Sources: **Next Generation Online** and Don Thomas' I.C. When (http://www.l4software.com/icwhen)











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IN THE STUDIO

It's been an on-again, off-again, on-again relationship between Enix and 989 Studios in trying to get the much-anticipated Japanese dance competition game *Bust-a-Groove* onto store shelves in the U.S. Falling snugly into the rhythm-action genre next to *Parappa*, *Bust-a-Groove* may be released before the end of 1999, but 989 isn't offering any dates. However, the word from Japan is that a sequel is already in the works.



U.K. developer Bizarre Creations, known for past work on the Psygnosis *Formula One* series, is hard at work on a Dreamcast game titled *Furballs*. The game has been in development for six months and has been described as a "cartoon action shooter" that combines third-person shooting with puzzle-style gameplay. **Next Generation** believes *Furballs* — with its cast of six cutesy, playable characters — may be a 3D title in the vein of the *Bust-a-Move/Puzzle Bobble* series. As of press time, no company had secured the rights to publish *Furballs*.



Early sales figures indicate that Eidos may have a sleeper hit on its hands with *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*, a squad-based, realtime strategy game set in Nazi-held territory. The developer, Pyro Entertainment of Madrid, Spain, is already working on the sequel.



ONLINE CONSOLE GAMING

Dwango's CEO **talks about the future**

With Dreamcast ready to launch pad in Japan, players could soon find themselves dueling over the Internet via the machine's online capabilities. But will online console gaming ever really take off? **Next Generation** caught up with Dwango CEO Robert Huntley and asked the burning question: Are consoles ready for the Internet?



Next Generation: Is the console industry finally ready for an online community?

Robert Huntley: Maybe the question is, "Is the online medium ready for a mass-consumer market?" By this, I mean, "Has the evolution of the online experience grown enough to compel the larger mass market to use it?"

NG: With Sega's Dreamcast, a console will finally have modem support. Will this be enough to "compel the larger mass market"?

RH: Well, I think it opens up two areas. One is the online game potential for the console market, and the second is an opportunity to access other online applications from a huge market of console game machine buyers. I think the Internet practically guarantees the modem will get some form of use.

NG: What kinds of games or genres do you see as the most promising for console online gaming?

RH: Because of the immaturity of the multiplayer experience coupled with the capabilities of these newer platforms, I think initially it will focus on shoot-'em-up games. As the experience matures and developers learn to expand their game experience offerings with a multiplayer aspect, we will see an expansion beyond that genre.

NG: Is the technology enough to support the kind of games expected from consoles — say, fighting games — or will console games begin to model themselves after *Quake* or *Command & Conquer*?

RH: Yes to the first. I think you have two different arenas when you talk about games on PCs versus games on consoles. The console environment is geared to the television environment where a gamepad works but not a keyboard and mouse. The types of applications that require a mouse and keyboard are better situated for a desktop environment where ergonomically it is more natural.

NG: Do you think consumers will be willing to pay the extra costs involved with online gaming?

RH: Yes, I think it will follow the cable TV model where at first a cable subscription was sold on premium services like HBO and evolved into a transport layer for all television programming. The same with the Internet. Currently the only online experiences people are really exposed to involve the problems associated with the performance of the Net. As with solutions like ours, there is a greater overhead in providing a quality experience, and I believe the public will be willing to pay for the better quality and performance.

NG: And finally, what are Dwango's plans for online console gaming?

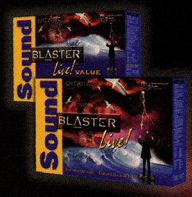
RH: We intend to offer a low latency to this arena. I am not at liberty at this time to name the companies we are working with, but you can bet we will be part of the first wave of console machines with online capabilities. It is a natural fit for our low latency solution, as many of the console games are very fast twitch experiences. NG

CRIBSHEET 17: OVERCLOCKING

What is it? Overclocking is the process of setting a product's clock or bus speed faster than it's intended to go to increase overall speed and performance. Overclocking is most common in CPUs and video cards, mostly 3D accelerators like Voodoo and Voodoo^2. **How's it done?** Overclocking is a relatively simple process, although it is important to know the limits and capabilities of the chips to overclock. When overclocking CPUs, there are two methods, specific to the type of motherboard owned. Some motherboards support SoftMenu, which allows the user to pick, from a menu, the desired speed to run. Others require the user to set jumpers to the appropriate bus speed and multiplier, which make up the overall speed of the system. For example, a 100MHz bus and a 4.0 multiplier would result in a CPU clocked at 400MHz. Overclocking video cards, on the other hand, results in a negligible performance increase, and is, for the most part, not recommended. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of overclocking?** The obvious advantage of overclocking is the noticeable speed increase. Increased speed can come at a price, though. Unstable CPU operations, bugs, crashes, and "blue screens of death" are a few of the atrocities that can result from excessive overclocking. In most cases, putting the clock speed back to normal fixes any problems. **Is it worth it?** To the hardcore gamer, running 5 or 10 more frames per second in *Unreal* or *Quake 2* is definitely worth the risk. Plus, experienced minds can quickly notice flaws in CPU or video operation before permanent damage occurs.

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ARCADIA

by **Marcus Webb**, editor of *RePlay* magazine

SEGA DEBUTS NAOMI

Gamers, want a sneak preview of Dreamcast this fall? You have two choices: Either fly to Japan to buy the home version, or visit your local arcade. Dreamcast's coin-op "sister version," Naomi, due to launch in the U.S. in November, uses an open architecture that is comparable to Sega's Model 3



Sega's new arcade hardware, Naomi, not only shares some chipsets with Dreamcast, but is also compatible with the VMS

technology and incorporates many technological elements, such as certain chipsets, from Dreamcast.

Naomi is a new universal arcade videogame system platform, intended to support a library of easily changed titles. Arcade owners will change titles via firmware, not CD-ROM swap. Some sort of smart card or PDA tie-in between Dreamcast and Naomi will be part of the package to allow cross-promotions between home and arcade games. Online tournaments for score comparison will definitely be possible, and remote realtime competition may also. Naomi's first three titles will be *House of the Dead 2*, *Zombie Zone*, and an as-yet-unnamed baseball game.

Sega tried a universal arcade cabinet once before, rather half-heartedly, with its Titan system a couple of years ago. This time the company is going all out. "We have developed Naomi to offer graphics and gameplay equal to our most expensive simulators," Sega Enterprises President Al Stone says. "I've built system games many times before, and we have the strategy correct," he adds, alluding to his successful marketing of universal coin-op systems from Nintendo back in the late '80s and early '90s. Sega says it's talking to some 15 software developers in the U.S. alone; major Japanese game makers including Capcom are also reportedly on board. Sega is supplying game development tools for designers to use in making their games "Naomi friendly."

GAMES GALORE

September's AMOA Expo was certainly not lacking new titles.

Sega offered perhaps the most ambitious collection, ranging from kits like *Dynamite Cop* to dedicated uprights like *Spikeout* to deluxe sit-down simulators like *Ocean Hunter*, *Star Wars Trilogy*, and *Daytona 2*.

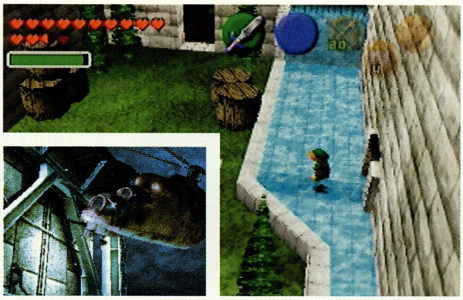
Konami weighed in with a new deluxe version of its *Fisherman's Bait* video simulator, complete with realistic rod and reel controls. Konami will also have a basketball game called *NBA Play By Play*, which features most of the sport's real-life athletes, although missing are Michael Jordan and a couple of other superstars.

U.S. sister companies Midway and Atari have several new titles that are getting the thumbs-up from arcades. Among them: Atari's *Gauntlet Legends*, an update to the '85 classic; *Site 4*, the sequel to *Area 51*; and the new *Vapor TRX* motorbike game. Midway's *CarnEvil* is a monster-themed shooting upright that clearly earned its red sticker rating for strong violence — you use a gun to blow away monsters, bit by bloody bit.

And how fares the PC-based arcade revolution? "Less hype, more product" was the verdict. Lazer-Tron showed ready-to-buy titles running on PC technology, all adapted from the home market. Among them: *Crazy Bus*, *Actual Soccer*, and *The Reap* (all licensed for arcade use by Opus), as well as *Quake Arcade* (licensed and adapted for arcades by LBE Systems). Look for at least five PC titles from Lazer-Tron and its allies by Q1 1999. Meanwhile, Quantum 3D demonstrated how its new Quicksilver arcade PC hardware is about as arcade-friendly (and developer- and publisher-friendly) as you could ask for. It's so smooth, expect many more titles by late '99.

THE INDUSTRY IS BOOMING

The IDSA's annual report shows that computer and video games are making **more money than ever**



Thanks in part to smashing titles like *Zelda 64* and *Metal Gear Solid*, the industry is expecting record-breaking revenues in 1998

The industry enjoyed a period of explosive growth in 1997, up 38% from the previous year. However, according to the second annual report by the Interactive Digital Software Association, in the first half of 1998 computer and videogame sales were up 30% over even 1997's record-breaking year.

"There is every reason to believe that interactive entertainment is firmly entrenched as a mainstream leisure-time activity in the U.S. and, increasingly, around the world," says Doug Lowenstein, president of the IDSA.

The report goes on to project that by year's end 27 to 30 million next generation consoles will have found their way into U.S. homes, and some 45% of homes will own a PC — an all-time high, thanks to plummeting hardware costs and sub-$1,000 PCs. Obviously, this opens up a tremendous market for entertainment software.

This industry has always been extremely hit-driven, with a small percentage of titles taking the lion's share of the revenue and all the other releases scrambling for the crumbs that are left. However, as the industry and its audience grow, Lowenstein paints a rosy picture for the future. "As the market deepens and broadens, you see that there is room for strong titles that may lack blockbuster status but nonetheless find a market. The mantra remains as it has always: Great games usually find a way into consumer homes." NG

PROFILE

Robert Baffy started his career programming and composing game soundtracks on the Commodore Amiga. By the time he graduated from high school, he had already founded his own software company, Genetic Fantasia, with a friend and had become a licensed Atari Jaguar developer. He has programmed and designed several independent titles, including *Bog Brothers*, *Beam Riders*, *Bit Hat Matt*, and now a series of Game Boy Color games. How does he feel if a game he has put so much into doesn't catch on? "Well, you can always use it for an ass rub." Oh, the humanity.

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BIG IN **JAPAN**

Next Generation reports from the Eastern front

Dishing dirt





The focus here is firmly on the fun factor, with stunts featuring heavily in the gameplay

After a sustained period of quiet, Sega's AM3 is due to return to the racing genre with a Model 3 title geared specifically to the U.S. market. *Dirt Devils* is best described as a cross between *Sega Rally* and *Daytona*, with a little of Namco's own *Dirt Dash* thrown in. Available as single, double, and quad link-ups, the game is an endurance race set over three widely varied stages — Canyon, Stadium, and Twin City 400.

Unlike either of its sister racers, *Dirt Devils* offers a driving experience more in tune with American tastes for extreme sports and destruction derbies, allowing players to ram their opponents off the track in order to secure the best lap. Outrageous jumps (such as leaping 20 buses) are commonplace, and the Twin City 400 stage makes good use of the Model 3 lighting capabilities, forcing drivers to use only their headlights to find their way.

As with *Daytona*, the cars are all U.S. models. Players have a choice of Desert Buggy, Baja Bug, a Toyota truck, and Humvee, with the only non-U.S. vehicle a fictional "Euro-prototype." As expected, each vehicle has its own unique handling characteristics, and to add to the realism, stablemate cabinet designer AM4 has included the now mandatory seat-mounted subwoofer speakers to simulate engine vibration.

Early impressions of *Dirt Devils* point to a fast and loose racing experience that Sega hopes will strike a chord with U.S. gamers, who all but ignored *Super GT* and *Le Mans 24* on their way to the likes of the less taxing *San Francisco Rush*. No U.S. release date has been announced yet for *Dirt Devils*, but **Next Generation** hopes that AM3 ensures this latest addition to its hallowed racing line will demonstrate more than just graphical and technical finesse.











***Dirt Devils* is the latest racer to emerge from the hallowed halls of Sega's AM3 division. It's ideal for the U.S.**

FISH BOY

As well as this Pokemon-branded Game Boy, **Next Generation** recently acquired *Grand Musashi RV* — a fishing game with a plastic reel that fits over the Game Boy casing. Next month: Game Boy *Origami World* (maybe).



JAMMA-BYTES

Capcom introduced *Tech-Romancer*, a robot fighting game, and *Jo Jo*, a 2D fighting title based on a popular Manga cartoon.



SNK pushed the originality envelope once more with (surprise) *Samurai Spirits 2* and *King of Fighters 98* but kept show-goers awake with a new title called *Shock Troopers Second Squad*. But only just.



Namco showcased *Race On*, another racing title, and *Gunen Wars*, a multiplayer shooting game that uses a cabinet-mounted camera to map the player's face onto the head of the main character. The company also surprised everyone with a new fighting game titled *Fighting Layer*, developed by ex-Capcom coders Arika.



Konami scored a hit with its *Dance Dance Revolution* cabinet. Eager Japanese gamers lined up to follow the rhythms of cheesy techno and disco tracks by jumping on floor-mounted pads. Not the most elegant display of modern dance **Next Generation** has witnessed, but quickly dispelled by the introduction of *Gradius 4* — a retro-classic in the making.

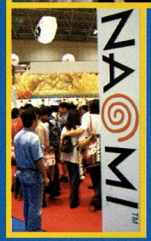


Kon'nichi wa Naomi

To say that the coin-op industry is facing a crisis would be no exaggeration. Expensive and elaborate cabinet setups, the bloated cost of high-end boards, and a lack of originality have hit market leader Sega hard, forcing it to adopt a cheaper alternative to the powerful but pricey Model 3 technology. The result is Naomi, a PowerVR-based solution that debuted at the 36th Japanese Amusement Machine Show (JAMMA) in Tokyo.

The four Naomi titles on display, all developed by Sega's AM1 division, were *House of the Dead 2*, *Blood Bullet — Side Story*, *Dynamite Baseball 98*, and an early, as-yet-untitled driving game. Of those, only *House of the Dead 2* and 3D fighting game *Blood Bullet* were playable, though both looked impressive. The rolling demo of the driving game suggests a battle format, in which you force your opponents over the sides of elevated tracks. Once again, the lineup is disappointing in terms of originality, but it's important for Sega to demonstrate continued technical progress as recognized leaders in the field of coin-op visuals. Which is where the rumors begin.



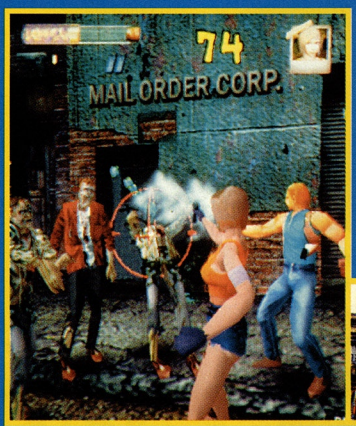


The PowerVR-based Naomi arcade board made its debut at the JAMMA show, but it's clearly underpowered

Though difficult to confirm, it is strongly believed that Sega's AM division, used to bleeding-edge technology, is unimpressed with Naomi's specifications. The board is not as powerful as Model 3 and goes against the unwritten charter of the AM teams — to create games that far exceed the capabilities of a home console. The result is that many believe Naomi will be phased in gradually and that, in order to stay firmly ahead of the competition, Sega will announce a new, improved Model 3 board (possibly, but not certainly, Model 4) early next year, which will coexist with the more Dreamcast-friendly Naomi.

NAOMI TECH SPECS

CPU: 200MHz Hitachi SH4 RISC CPU
Graphics: PowerVR second generation
Sound: 32-bit Super Intelligent Sound Processor/64 channel ADPCM
Main memory: 32MB (64-bit SD-RAM)
Texture memory: 16MB
Color: 16 million colors
CG: Bump-mapping, fogging, alpha-blending, mip-mapping, trilinear-filtering, anti-aliasing, environment-mapping, specular effects
Game port: JAMMA standard (JVS)
Expandability: CD-ROM (optional)







Among the Naomi lineup, *Blood Bullet* (above) and *House of the Dead 2* seemed nearest completion

SAMSUNG

GXTV

hyper amplified sound

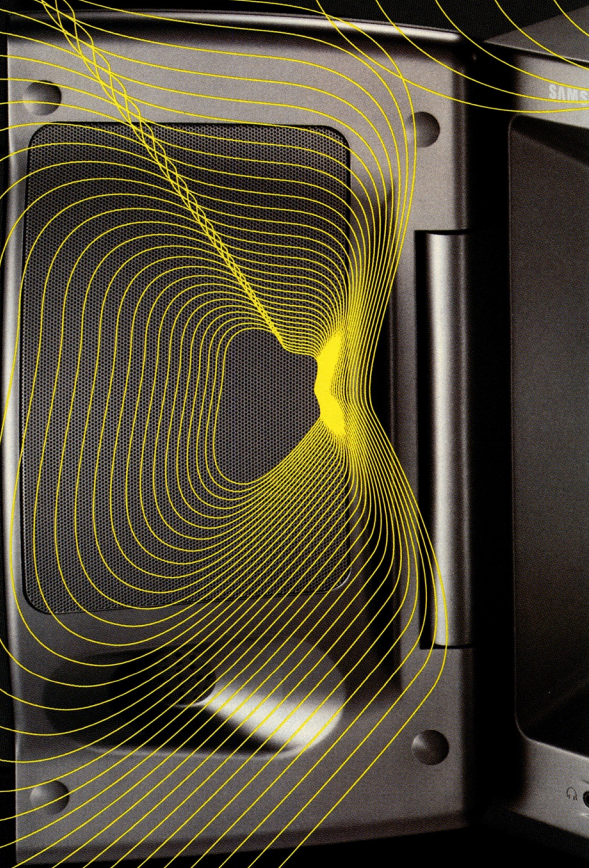
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[parasite eve]



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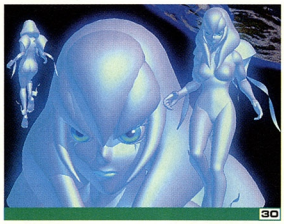
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Blue Stinger DREAMCAST **X-Wing Alliance** PC **Beneath** PC
Saboteur PC/PLAYSTATION **Roll Cage** PC/PLAYSTATION

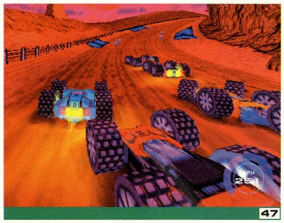
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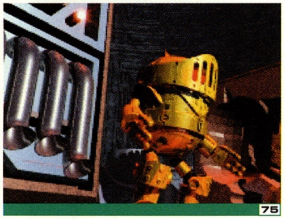
What's new from the front lines of the game world











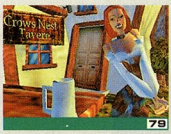


Dreamcast. It's going to be here before you know it. Every day seems to begin with a Dreamcast announcement, and after Japan's launch on November 27, expect to see plenty of games coming along. This issue, *Blue Stinger* and *E.G.G.* round out the Dreamcast contenders. Happy holidays.

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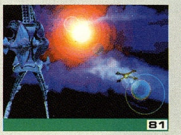
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BLUE STINGER

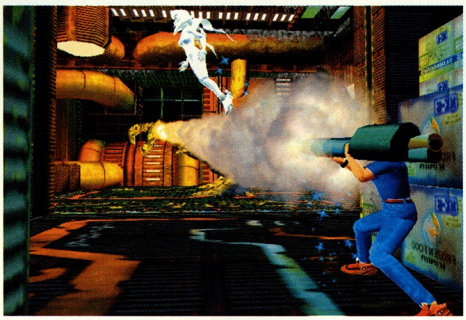
After some worrying second-tier announcements, Sega powers up with Japanese coders Climax Graphics

After the welcome, if expected, launch announcements by Sega, the Dreamcast lineup is in dire need of some original material. With the exception of *Sonic Adventure*, the first wave of titles in Japan will be a classic, if something less than inspiring, mix of coin-op updates (*Sega Rally 2, VF3*) and the blatantly odd (*Pen-Pen Tricelon, Kitea*). But rescue is on its way from an unlikely source: Climax Graphics, a semi-independent spin-off of *Dark Saviour* creators Climax. Its first title is *Blue Stinger*, and **Next Generation** has played it.

First impressions reveal a game still in need of polish (not unusual with almost three months of development time left) but full of potential. Running on a Set 5 Dreamcast development board, the 18-person Climax team claims that *Blue Stinger* is more than 70% complete. As **Next Generation** gets to grips with the game, Director Ayuma Kojima is quick to point out that the currently sluggish 15fps refresh rate will be a smooth 60fps once the code is fully optimized.

Visually, *Blue Stinger* resembles a realtime, high-res *Resident Evil*. Even the plot bears some similarities. The hero, Elliot G Ballade, is a member of an elite outfit named ESER, or Especial Sea Rescue. He finds himself exploring a town with more monsters than people. Ballade himself is superbly animated and, despite the obvious slowdown inherent in the early build, exhibits smooth motion-captured movement.

As a bench test for Dreamcast's





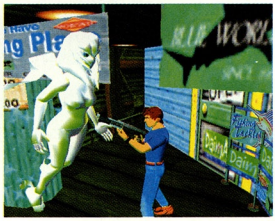


***Blue Stinger* is essentially a realtime interpretation of Capcom's seminal horror title, *Resident Evil*. Not easy shoes to fill ...**









The open environments range from hospitals to sleazy nightclubs

FORMAT
Dreamcast

PUBLISHER
Sega

DEVELOPER
Climax Graphics

RELEASE DATE
December 1998 (Japan)

ORIGIN
Japan







Climax Graphics has created a colorful and detailed world

much-vaunted graphics muscle, *Blue Stinger* is already something of a success and is the first third-party game to achieve a visual panache exceeding that of titles already available for the higher-end PC cards. Texture detail, for example, is particularly high, approaching, and at times surpassing, Sega's coin-op Model 3 board. Ballade's weapons also provide ample opportunity for graphical flair. Using the rocket launcher, for instance, results in highly realistic flame effects, and the explosions are reflected on all surfaces, illuminating the faces of the giant monsters a split-second before impact. Ballade is also reflected accurately whenever he passes shiny surfaces or windows and throws a genuine shadow that not only morphs with his movements, but also intensifies and dims, depending on the quality of the ambient light.

Like Capcom's seminal horror title, *Blue Stinger* is as much about atmospheric exploration as it is about action, and the power of the Dreamcast technology has created the most impressive realtime town yet seen in a videogame, permitting you to explore more than 230 rooms (virtually every building in the town) and drive a number of abandoned vehicles. As Ballade makes his way around, the technological leap demonstrated by the new Sega hardware over the aging PlayStation and N64 is clear for all to see, with no clumsy pop-in or exaggerated fogging spoiling the view.

Next Generation has its doubts about whether *Blue Stinger* will be complete in time for the delayed Dreamcast launch on November 27 but is certain that if Climax Graphics can remain focused, Sega will be signing up for a sequel sooner rather than later. NG













Though the polygon detail level is sub-Model 3, the monsters look impressive, as do the lighting effects and morphing transitions





TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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CAVEDOG ENTERTAINMENT

With little fanfare, Ron Gilbert's start-up studio totally annihilated the realtime strategy market last holiday season. Now with four new titles and an innovative online component in the works for 1999, can Cavedog continue to conquer?



The Boneyards interface for *Total Annihilation* should be easy to navigate; it displays the map for *Galactic Wars*

QuakeWorld, Battle.Net, and Westwood Chat are just a few of the developer-born online extensions that have emerged in the last two years. Cavedog Entertainment is the latest company to unveil its new online component, Boneyards (where else would cave dogs play?). Scheduled to launch sometime in December or January, Boneyards will be more than just a matching service.

Total Annihilation is the only game Cavedog has at retail, so naturally it will be the first title to go live on Boneyards. While designing the system, network architects wanted to give gamers a more compelling reason to go online than simple matchmaking. The result is the tentatively



TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

FORMAT
PC

RELEASE DATE
March 1999



The artists have provided several variations on the same animation. Units now move more realistically and look less like repetitive toy soldiers







Calling all captains! Naval warfare plays a prominent role in *Kingdoms*

Kingdoms designer Clayton Kauzlaric seems to be doing quite well without the assistance of his former co-worker, *Total Annihilation* designer Chris Taylor. (Kauzlaric and Taylor were partnered on the original *TA*, with Kauzlaric overseeing the art.)

With *Kingdoms*, Kauzlaric brings four races to a fantasy universe that draws from a broad base of history and mythology. Each race takes its character from an elemental deity, either earth, fire, water, or air. Of the roughly 40 units per race, many are melee-based, so expect to see a big change in the way battles are fought. (*Total Annihilation*'s units were almost all projectile-based.) Of course, some projectile weapons exist in *Kingdoms*, notably shipboard cannons and catapults. Other interesting units include large siege-engine devices, wizards, and beautifully rendered dragons.

The game engine has been fully overhauled with 50% new code, and many of the original *TA* gameplay elements have been improved and adjusted to fit within the fantasy environment.

"We've always had our range and line of sight rise as players climbed hills," says Kauzlaric of the original *TA*. "But we're exaggerating that with *Kingdoms*. Archers will noticeably gain line of sight and range as players climb hills."

Kauzlaric also notes that bases will be immune to low-level units. In his words, "It doesn't make sense that a guy with a sword can destroy a castle."

And it would be stupid to ask Kauzlaric if he's working on *Total Annihilation 2* yet. Considering how well *Kingdoms* is shaping up under his art and design direction, this fantasy departure should more than make up for any delay to the original's sequel.





***Kingdoms* already features some fantastic texture work, and the backgrounds look virtually prerendered**



A close look at the *Galactic Wars* map reveals the battle line between Arm and Core. Illuminated planets are in contention

titled *Galactic Wars*, an elaborate and epic tournament system set in a universe where players fight for either Arm or Core.

"We wanted it to be as easy as just playing *Total Annihilation*," says Boneyards programmer Tim Royal. In fact, players will never have to leave the game to play online. A patch for *Total Annihilation* retrofits a Boneyards option right onto the menu page. From there, players must register as Arm or Core players, and then they can go directly to the *Galactic Wars* map screen. The map will consist of 50 to 70 planets, with numerous planets in daily contention between Arm and Core.

"You'll always be on a planet," Royal explains. "When you move to one that's in



AMEN

FORMAT
PC

RELEASE DATE
Summer 1999

Add this one to the growing list of story-based, first-person shooters — but certainly don't write it off. *Amen* (powered by Cavedog's own "Amengine") brings players to the year 2033, when one-third of the world's population has gone insane overnight. As SAS member Bishop 6, players uncover a story of "X-Files" proportions.



According to Lead Designer Greg MacMartin, "The story is the game." MacMartin cites *System Shock* as his main inspiration and doesn't see this 17-act saga as a first-person shooter, suggesting that plenty of adventure elements will provide relief from the standard point-and-strafe fare. But MacMartin doesn't mean "find the door switch" when he says adventure; he means adventure in the context of the film *The Fugitive*. In an early demo of the game's powerful scripting engine, players actually have to survive a ride on a runaway train that gets thrown from its tracks, knocking out supports inside a subway station and causing a cave-in.





The action will take place in a variety of locations — warehouses, snowy compounds, and airports

In-game characters were nowhere to be seen in the demo shown to **Next Generation**, but as in *Max Payne*, body part damage is being realistically modeled. The team has been able to model some detailed levels at very impressive sizes — for example, an aircraft carrier modeled to scale. MacMartin says the team has also had to build more vehicles into the game just because some levels are too big to navigate otherwise.

As it stands now, the engine is a technical achievement, but it may seem less cutting-edge next year when Id and 3D Realms show off more of *Quake III* and *Prey*.



A P200 with hardware acceleration will be required to run the game at this level of detail



These preproduction sketches suggest the game will provide its fair share of heavily armored characters and some serious firepower



Summary information about each planet adds color to the *Galactic Wars* universe

contention, you have the option to create a *Total Annihilation* game and play it for the galactic war, and that's basically as simple as it gets. We'll take care of the rest of it."

With plenty of battles to be fought every day, Boneyards designers will keep track of all scoring and compile daily results. There will be two dedicated servers, one for the East Coast and one for the West Coast, so two galactic wars will be waged simultaneously. Ultimately, for either side to win, the opposing capital planet must be captured along with 70% of the opposing planets.

What about cheaters, traitors, and conspirators who want to throw battles to better one side? All have been taken into consideration. "A registered user cannot change sides but once," says Director of Online Technology Rick Lambright. "You have to wait until Victory Day to change sides."

Lambright also says that games must last an unspecified amount of time to count toward the overall galactic war. And most important, Lambright says that on any given planet, players can only participate in one battle per day, but there will be between eight and 12 planets in contention.

Of course, Boneyards will be more than just *Galactic Wars*. And the group is very much aware that this meta-game will appeal far more to the hardcore crowd than to casual players. However, Boneyards



ELYSIUM

FORMAT
PC

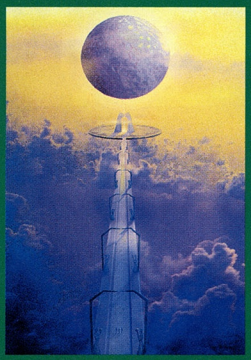
RELEASE DATE
Fall 1999

Elysium is both the most ambitious and the most ambiguous of Cavedog's titles. In its early state, the game is difficult to define from the little top-down action seen in the demo.

"I see this as a very action-based RPG," says Producer/Designer John Cutter, whose impressive history includes *Betrayal at Krondor*. He sees the game as having the easy action gameplay of *Diablo* and the cinematic appeal of *Resident Evil*. But very important to Cutter is the continuing story, set in the dream world of Elysium. The game is planned to span 38 episodes, the first five of which will ship as the initial game. Because it may take as many as three years to ship all 38 episodes, *Elysium* will feature scalable technology to keep the game looking fresh. The game's editor, called REM (Rapid Episode Maker), will ensure the episodes can be released regularly if they are in demand, but the pricing model and method of delivery for additional episodes have yet to be determined.



The finished product will feature powerful cameras that are just now enabling the designers to create this kind of shot







The mysterious nature of this dream world is conveyed through some fantastic concept art of characters and buildings





In *Galactic Wars*, each planet in contention has a chat room where players can set up games

will still provide matching services and quick play options that cater to beginners. Also, ranking and ladder systems will be in place, including several unique ladders — for instance, the efficiency ladder, which rates not only players' wins, but also how well players handled their energy and metal.

Beyond *Total Annihilation*, the Boneyards team is ramping up for *TA: Kingdoms*, which will ship with online service support. Meanwhile, *Elysium* is being designed as a single-player title, so whether it will work with Boneyards remains to be seen. *Amen* and *Good and Evil* will definitely figure prominently in the future of the network.

"But we want to stay open with other services," says Cavedog Communications Manager Brandon Smith. "We still want people to play our games on Ten or wherever it is they want to play."

In what would definitely be a show of good faith, the team is considering listing the tournaments of other service providers on the Boneyards calendar. After meeting with the Boneyards team members, **Next Generation** left with the sense that they were going to be integral in adding longevity to Cavedog games. And who better to build strong online components for games than the developers themselves? NG

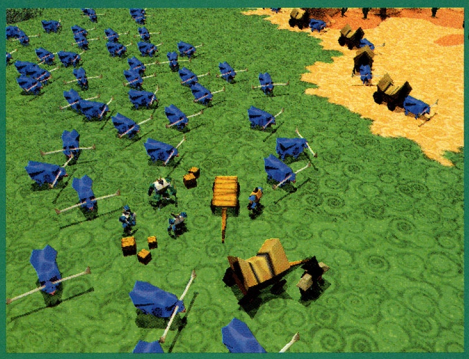


GOOD AND EVIL

FORMAT
PC

RELEASE DATE
Winter 1999











Early environments already feature villages, port towns, and island communities

Classic-adventure fans may be disappointed that the man responsible for the first two *Monkey Island* games is not making a straightforward adventure game. However, Ron Gilbert is quick to note his combination fantasy/role-playing/realtime-strategy game will be loaded with adventure game elements.

"The thing I like about adventure games is the stories," says Gilbert. "*Good and Evil* is not a game where you read the story in the manual and then you go and play the game. You uncover the story as you play through the game."

But the core of the game is fantasy role-playing. Players must lead their medieval-based character through a series of quests that stretch across several time periods. For example, players may encounter an alien, a cowboy, or a gangster scenario. When combat is introduced, players' party members become more like units in a realtime-strategy game.

Sure enough, the game will bring with it Gilbert's brand of humor. "It's really a parody," he says, assuring us that adventure, role-playing, and realtime-strategy games will be targeted. "We're really kind of cutting to the core of what those things are about, in a way that a movie like *Spinal Tap* made fun of heavy metal bands."

In one scenario titled "A Tale of Two Religions," players are called upon by the "good religion" to retrieve its good book, which has been stolen by the "evil religion." Gilbert explains that through the course of this quest, players discover that the book had actually been lost to the evil religion in a card game. Is *Good and Evil* going to send up the stereotypical good-versus-evil plotline found in nearly every game? You bet.





Cowboys, aliens, and other whacked-out characters bring variety and comedy to the game

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Actual gameplay screen shot



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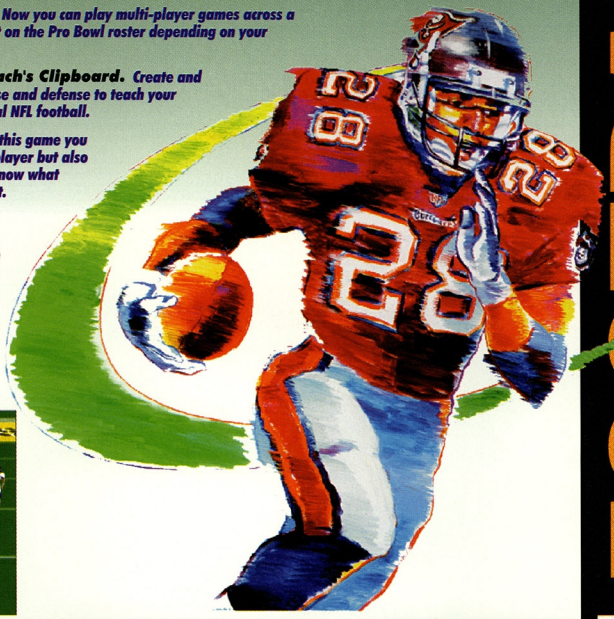
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Hey, there are plenty of games for people who watch football for the cheerleaders and half-time shows. For the true fan, there's VR Football.

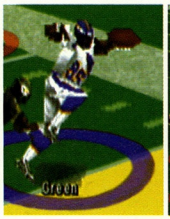
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- **Get In The Game!** *Hear the trash-talking on the line, the chanting of the crowd, the booming stadium announcer, helmets butting, and the crunch of jarred bones all in Dolby surround sound.*













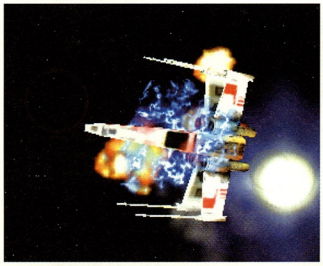
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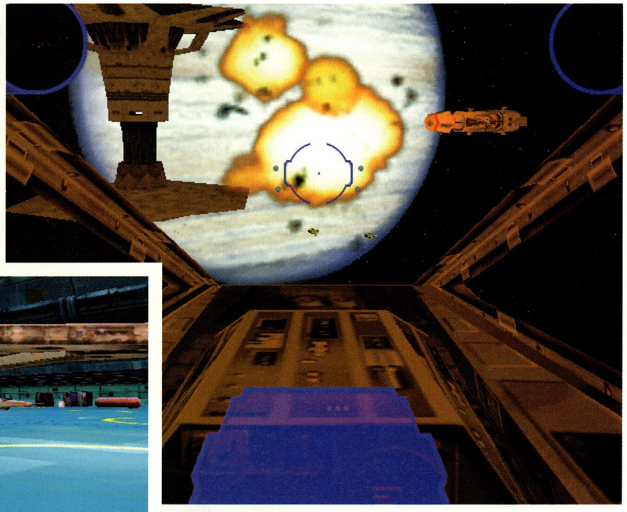
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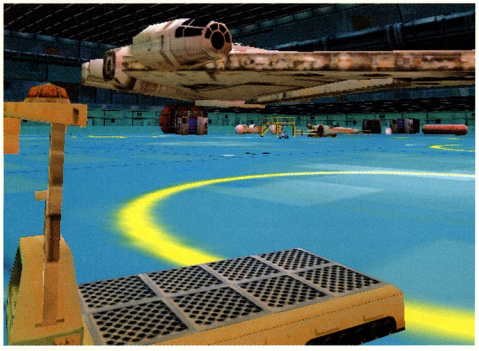
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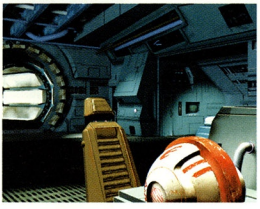
X-WING ALLIANCE

The latest game in the popular *X-Wing* series promises a greater emphasis on story









The *X-Wing* series is one of the most successful Lucas franchises. This time, you get an unfolding storyline that pits you not just against the Empire, but also against a rival family

Larry Holland suppresses a yawn. "I was up pretty late programming," he explains as he boots the PC. Holland is at heart a flight-sim man, but his ability to marry complex flight models with George Lucas' *Star Wars* universe has made both him and his company, Totally Games, annual chart-toppers. And though it's not yet crunch time for LucasArts' latest *X-Wing* title, it's in the final stretch. The prized creator of both LucasArts' most successful franchise and the fondly remembered *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* is two-thirds of the way through *X-Wing Alliance*, a game that's about as close to a sure thing as you can get in today's fickle PC market.

Heeding the criticisms from fans that his last effort, *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*, was too clinical, Holland and his 15-person team are making a welcome return to substance and plot with *Alliance*, casting the player in the role of a Rebel pilot and strong arm of the family trading business. The result is an evolving story that pits the player against not only the familiar enemy of the Empire, but also the pirate armies of a rival trading family. Holland describes it as *The Godfather* meets *Return of the Jedi*.





The detail levels of the models have been doubled since *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*

The trading elements allow Holland to mine a new seam of the *Star Wars* universe — including new ships and ships seen previously only in the detailed sketches Lucasfilm made in preparation for the movies. They also provide him with the perfect excuse to finally include the Corellian Transport, the same class as the Millennium Falcon; players may either pilot it themselves or take seats in the

FORMAT
PC

PUBLISHER
LucasArts

DEVELOPER
Totally Games

RELEASE DATE
Spring 1999

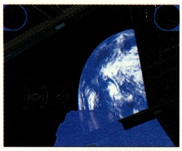
ORIGIN
U.S.

gunner position to re-enact one of the most memorable scenes from the film. Of interest to any *Star Wars* nut is the promised rendezvous with the Falcon herself during the final battle for Endor level, which, incredibly, will include as many as 128 ships.

"We had it running with twice that number," says Holland, "but we wanted to ensure that the frame rate stayed at an optimum level. Though *Alliance* benefits from 3D acceleration enormously, we still believe that it's important to build games that everyone can play, with the broadest possible appeal, and that means unassisted Pentiums."

With a 3Dfx card engaged, however, *X-Wing Alliance* is a joy to behold. The ships are twice as detailed as those in *X-Wing Vs TIE* (an X-Wing, for example, has more than 400 polygons in *Alliance*, as opposed to just 250 in *X-Wing Vs TIE*), and the sheer sense of scale that greets the player approaching a starbase is breathtaking. Holland admits that with all these ships operating independently, many of his late nights have been filled with AI work. He believes that as the graphical realism increases, so too should the behavior of NPC and enemy ships; so, for example, they now have limited ammo and fly back to base to re-arm before returning to a battle, and they weigh threats on the battlefield more accurately.

Of course, with almost six months of development left on the game, there's plenty of time for things to go awry, but Holland and his crew have absolutely no doubts that this will be the most successful *X-Wing* title yet. With millions of sales under their belts and what is easily the most obsessive fan base in the market, they give **Next Generation** no reason to suspect otherwise. Just how they'll fit Marlon Brando in the cockpit of an X-Wing, however, is another matter. NG





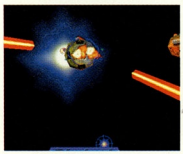
The 3D virtual cockpit is one of the many new features in *Alliance*



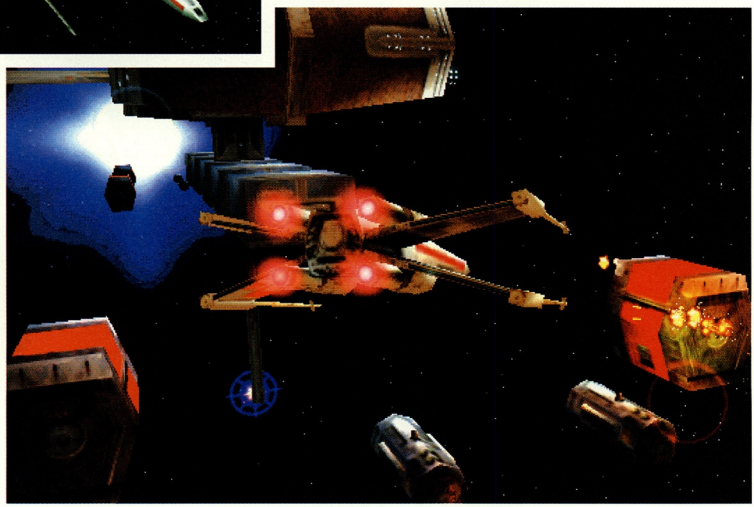
Holland and his 15-person team are making **a welcome return to substance and plot with *Alliance***







Enhanced lighting effects feature heavily in this latest *X-Wing* title



About one-third of the missions in *X-Wing Alliance* are based around the trials and tribulations of the player's family business. Larry Holland describes the game as *The Godfather* meets *Return of the Jedi*

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ROLL CAGE

Will this futuristic racer surpass *Wipeout*?





Multiplayer action on the PC includes three special courses and deathmatch modes for up to six players. The PlayStation version will support split-screen racing







Explosions will create chain reactions — falling buildings derail moving trains and so on

At first glance, *Roll Cage* would be easy to categorize as *Wipeout* on wheels. But, more accurately, the game takes the action and playability of *Mario Kart* and substitutes the cutesy turtle shells with devastating rail guns. As ATD game designer David Perryman suggests, it will be quite different from the average racer.

"It's so annoying when you hit a wall and slow down," says Perryman. "With *Roll Cage*, we want to keep you going."

And Perryman isn't kidding. At nearly 70% complete, this racing combat game already offers nonstop action. The premise is simple. These thin-bodied, fat-wheeled vehicles of the future are double-sided, so even when they turn over, they can continue to run in the same direction. That may sound gimmicky, but **Next Generation** found inspiration in ATD's ability to create a consuming and easy-to-play game backed by a robust physics engine, finely tuned controls, and some innovative track and weapon designs.

The game offers 16 tracks spread across four distinct worlds (in the single-player mode, three tracks will open at a time). Because of the highly combative nature of the racing, the five opposing cars will provide plenty of competition. And with twisting, high-banked curves, flashy weapon effects, and futuristic backgrounds, *Roll Cage* clearly takes some visual cues from *Wipeout*. With one big exception.

"Nearly everything onscreen is destroyable," says Perryman.

And, in fact, it is. During one race around a city-based track, **Next Generation** was stunned to see opposing cars launching rockets at buildings, only to have the skyscrapers come tumbling down onto the player's



Ominous environments are painted with complex textures — obviously *Roll Cage* derives inspiration from *Wipeout*. Weather effects like snow and rain will be added

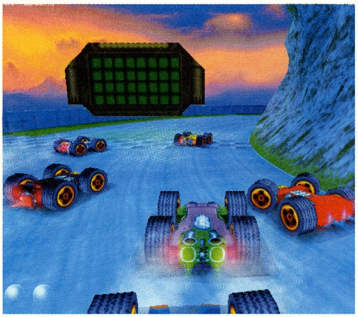
FORMAT
PC/PlayStation

PUBLISHER
Psygnosis

DEVELOPER
ATD

RELEASE DATE
Q1 1999

ORIGIN
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Another victim of the driller rocket is sent skyward (right), and although it is easy for players to become disoriented when their vehicle is flipping end over end, pressing the auto-correct button properly realigns the car to the course

car. Perryman explains that "dropping buildings" is a big part of the strategy; debris left on the track inhibits those unfortunate enough to be caught in the wake of a collapsing high-rise.

"There are also lots of little secrets," Perryman says. "Missiles auto-target building supports, but if you press up on the D-pad when you launch one, it will target other cars."

Even the six weapons have been tuned to keep everyone moving at a fast clip. One innovative missile opens a warp hole that warps its victim to a position on the track behind the player who shot it (also seen in *Extreme-G*). Another bold weapon comes straight from *Quake* — a driller rocket that, in similar fashion to the rail gun, destroys everything in its path.

Considering that the last ATD-developed game seen in the U.S. was Activision's *Blast Chamber*, it's a bit of a surprise that the little-known Warwick-based operation is heading a project with such potential. What isn't surprising is that the 15-person team lists six programmers and six artists, which explains why the game runs so smoothly (locked at 30 frames per second) and features well-tuned gameplay that complements a fantastic physics model. The title should be finished inside an 18-month development cycle.

Although *Wipeout*, *Destruction Derby*, and *Formula One* began an impressive run of racing titles for Psygnosis, other publishers have closed the next generation gap — for instance, Sony with *Gran Turismo* and Midway with its fantastic N64 port of *San Francisco Rush*. Will *Roll Cage* be enough to propel Psygnosis to the front of the pack again? The odds are good that it will. NG



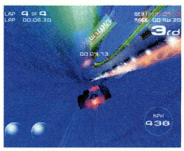






The game will ship with 16 tracks, but they will also be mirrored





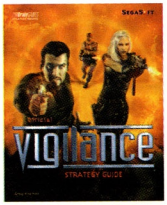


The PlayStation version (above) holds its own but falls short of the 3Dfx-enhanced PC version

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STRATEGY GUIDES

Mission 1
oil rig

chapter 4

mission profile : SION's headquarters on an abandoned oil rig somewhere near Papua, New Guinea has come under attack by unknown terrorists. They appear to be after vital computer files. You must destroy the files and our satellite up-link to keep the files out of enemy hands.

Objectives

- **Recover C4 explosives from the Security Center.**
- **Use the C4 to destroy the Satellite Dish.**
- **Insert a virus into the computer core.**

Deep Cover Operative Briefing

Much as you hate to do it, this unexpected attack from some unknown terrorist force has compelled you to "soil your nest," destroying any information useful to your enemies. Alas, this newly christened base of operations must be abandoned and scuttled, but you're just the agent to do it.

Your first visit to the Oil Rig is a fairly basic trip: find keys, unlock doors, and complete your objectives. It's a long level, but navigation is relatively simple with a linear progression of rooms and very little backtracking. And there are lots of landmarks to help you find your way.

The Order forces populating the Oil Rig are pretty easy to beat, but they are (often) moderately armed. There are a few sniper nests to circumvent and one near-hopeless attack on a large squad of foes. Both of these traps can, however, be avoided through stealth and some long-distance marksmanship.

To pass through the Oil Rig, you must:

1. Snag the CD containing the virus.
2. Scavenge the Blue Keycard.
3. Pocket the C4 in the Security Center.
4. Get the Yellow Keycard.
5. Go topside and blow up the Satellite Dish.
6. Pick up the Red Keycard.
7. Insert the virus into the computer core.
8. Exit the Oil Rig.

Recommended Agent



Kestrel

Skills Required

- Marksmanship
- Speed
- High Heavy Armor
- Moderate Demolitions
- Recon, low
- Computer Hacking
- Stealth

Enemies

- Mercenaries
- Mercenary Captains
- Male Fanatic (Level Boss)

Items

AMR 50 Sniper Rifle
Blue Keycard
G-12 Caseless Assault Rifle
G-20 Silenced Assassin's Pistol
Heavy Armor
Light Armor
Med Kits
Pistol Clips
Red Keycard
Rifle Clips
Super Med Kits
Viper Submachine Gun
Yellow Keycard

Map Room



You'll need this handy rifle to get anywhere in this level..

Corridor



Keep your eyes peeled for these guys lurking behind the pillars.

Upper Deck, Section 2



Jump this rail and walk along the duct to seize the Sniper Rifle.

Walkthrough

1. Command Office

You begin your self-destructive mission in the command office of SION headquarters. Exit into the next room with the large map and submerged floor.

2. Map Room

Exchange fire with a half dozen Mercenaries and gather up some Light Armor, two Med Kits, and two Pistol Clips.

Cross the room and pass through the door into the conference room.

3. Conference Room

Grab the G-12 Rifle (and arm it), note two Super Med Kits, and return to the Map Room. Pick up the virus CD from this room—you'll need it later to complete the mission.

4. Map Room

Turn left and follow the green corridor.

5. Corridor

Creep down the Corridor, plugging the two pistol-wielding Mercenaries hiding in dark corners. Duel with the remaining trio of Mercenaries, then turn right at the end of the hall and board the elevator.

Keep your eyes peeled for these guys lurking behind the pillars.

6. Elevator

Ride the elevator to the top deck and exit.

7. Upper Deck, Section 1

Turn left, take out the Mercenary lurking around the corner, and pass through the armored door.

8., 9., 10. Blue Box Room, Ladder, Catwalk

The door opens to a large blue shipping container and a black clad Mercenary. If you don't kill him before he spots you, another Mercenary wielding a Viper will rush around the corner to greet you. Once you've taken care of the first two Mercs, drop the third Merc on the catwalk above. The Mercenary on the catwalk will leave behind a Viper Submachine Gun. Snap up two Med Kits, climb the ladder to the catwalk, and cross through the door to Upper Deck Section 2. For some additional power-ups, you can jump from the catwalk to a stack of crates and find some Heavy Armor and a batch of Fragmentation Grenades.

11. Upper Deck, Section 2

Peek out from the green room and nail the Mercenary on the deck and the Mercenary Captain on the high platform.

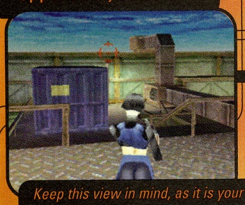
Tip

Remember this Spot! Before you head down the staircase to Upper Deck Section 3, you should take note of two great sniper posts that will come in handy later.

Tip

Look ahead and to the left. You should see a large tower and the Satellite Dish that will be your final destination. Later in the mission, these two points will be very heavily defended. But you can pick off the opposition from a safe distance at this spot.

Upper Deck, Section 2



Keep this view in mind, as it is your key to picking off some baddie clusters from a safe distance.

Upper Deck, Section 2



Off in the distance is your final goal, the Satellite Dish.

Upper Deck, Section 2



Peer through this gap to find a 2-for-1 sniper post.

Upper Deck, Section 3



This Mercenary and clutch of others are best picked off from the safety of this high deck.

Tip

Now, facing the Main Deck, turn around to face a large, blue shipping container and an air conditioner. If you look carefully, you'll see a gap between the air unit and the container, walk through it. You'll want to return to this point twice in the course of this level. From here you should see a box suspended by a cable and, to your right, the Rig's Heli-pad.

At the top of this staircase, hop over the railing and walk along the duct to a platform on which you'll find an AMR 50 Sniper Rifle and a Rifle Clip. Fire away at the Mercenary who takes aim when you grab the rifle. Return to where you jumped the rail.

12. Upper Deck, Section 3

Turn right and descend to the deck, peer down the next staircase heading below deck, and open fire on the Mercenary at the base of the stairs and the reinforcing Merc who you will follow you from the upper deck. Grab the two Med Kits before heading down.

13. Pipe Room

Follow the passages of this room. At the first intersection,

STEALTH POINT:

Instead of taking the next step to the balcony containing two Super Med Kits and suffering the fire from the Mercenary Captain above, try this stealth move instead. Return to the top deck and walk between the ductwork and the blue shipping container. You should be able to see the Mercenary Captain killing time on a suspended box. Fire away (grab the Heavy Armor) and return to the pair of Super Med Kits.

beware the cluster of Mercenaries lurking around both corners.

As you round the next corner, pump the Mercenary Captain and inspect his lifeless body for a Blue Keycard. Keep your eyes peeled for Light Armor.

Grab any health boost you need here and take out the Mercenary Captain lurking above (if you didn't use the Stealth Point). Round the blue shipping container and ambush the Mercenary waiting there.

Continue to the left and shoot the Mercenary in the back–don't forget his stash of Rifle and Pistol Clips and the 4-Gauge Shotgun he drops. Proceed onto the Catwalk.

14. Blue Door Porch

Follow the catwalk around to the Blue Door. Open it and enter the Security Reception Area. Get ready for an ambush from around the corners as you approach this door—black clad Mercenaries will rush you from either side.

15. Security Reception Area

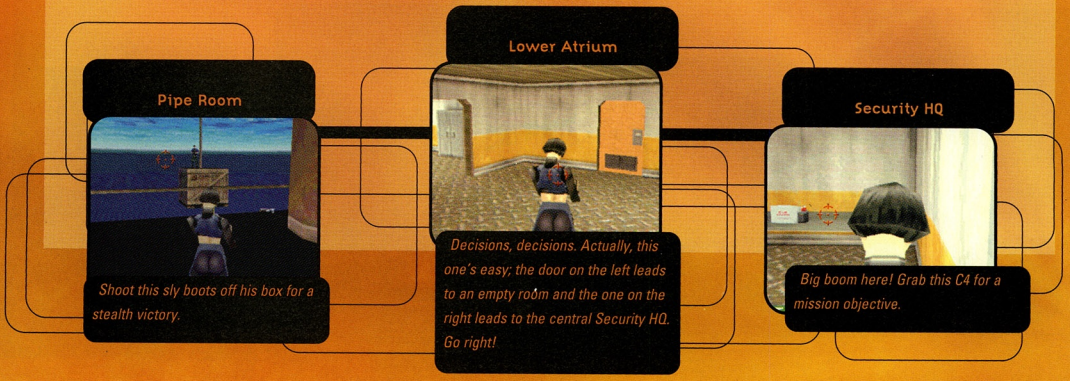
Pass through the Blue Door into the Office of the Security Center and snuff the two Mercenaries guarding the entrance.

16. Lower Atrium

Pass through the office door. Open doorway into the lower atrium where a G-12-wielding Mercenary waits. Inspect and clear the open rooms of this atrium and go to the corner with two closed doors. The door on the left leads to an empty room, but the one on the right goes to the Security Center headquarters and the site of your first mission objective.

17. Security HQ

Enter the room carefully and take out the Mercenaries above you. Climb the stairs (and grab the two Med Kits behind the bars if you need them). Enter the office and grab the C4 Explosive Pack. Return to the Lower Atrium.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

18. Lower Atrium

Pop the two Mercenaries chewing the fat in the Atrium, then check out the open rooms and head up either of the two staircases to the Upper Atrium, taking out any Mercenaries you find in your way.

19. Upper Atrium

Upstairs, clear the hallways of resistance and inspect each of the three open rooms. You should find three Light Armor and three Med Kits. Now, proceed upstairs to the heli-pad.

STEALTH POINT:

Instead of rushing onto the heli-pad, this little detour makes your trip easier. Return to the same spot from the last Stealth Point (next to the hanging box) and turn to the right to look over to the heli-pad. Pull out your Sniper Rifle and nail the Mercenary and his Captain who guard the pad. Now return to the heli-pad and claim the Yellow Key the Captain dropped.

20. Heli-pad

Go through the doorway to the heli-pad and plug the Mercenary and his Captain. The Captain drops the Yellow Keycard. Before you go, hop over the railing to the wide metal deck and grab the Heavy Armor next to the large wooden crate. Return now to the Blue Door. After you plug the Mercenary Captain with the Yellow Keycard, two more Mercenaries will appear to guard the exit from the Blue Door. Creep up to them carefully along the edge of the helipad roof and plug them before they are aware of you.

21. Blue Door Porch

Open the door but beware the twin Viper-toting Mercenaries that have arrived on the scene. Turn to the left and follow the catwalk to the Yellow Door.

22. Yellow Door Catwalk

Open the Yellow Door to the Control Room.

23. Control Room

Pass through the Yellow Door and clear the area (note the Red Door here that leads to the level exit). Enter the open door to the Computer Room.

24. Computer Room

Step into the Computer Room, nail the Mercenary, and recover the Super Med Kit and Universal Ammo.

Return to the Control Room.

25. Control Room

Climb the stairs to the Satellite Dish.

STEALTH POINT:

Return again to the sniper point. Look across the rig to the deck containing the Satellite Dish. Using your Sniper Rifle, ventilate as many of the waiting Mercenaries as you can. This will make your assault on the dish itself far less dangerous. Once you have cleared the plate, you can return to the Satellite Dish deck.

26. Satellite Dish

Pass through the door, but be careful–a whole squad of Mercenaries and their Captain await. Plant the C4, and let 'er rip.



Tip

To plant the C4, arm it as you would a weapon (press F5 for its hotkey) and point your crosshairs on the dish. Press fire and the C4 will arc gracefully onto the dish. The countdown starts immediately, so get far away.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

With the Satellite Dish decimated, head for the Control Room. Below, another Mercenary Captain will have appeared. Kill him and he will drop the Red Keycard that will allow you to open the door to the elevator. Go though the Red Door and take the elevator down to the computer core.

27. Control Room

Open the Red Door and take the elevator down.

28. Red Elevator

Go through the door, down the passage, make a right at the T-junction, pass through another door and enter the computer core.

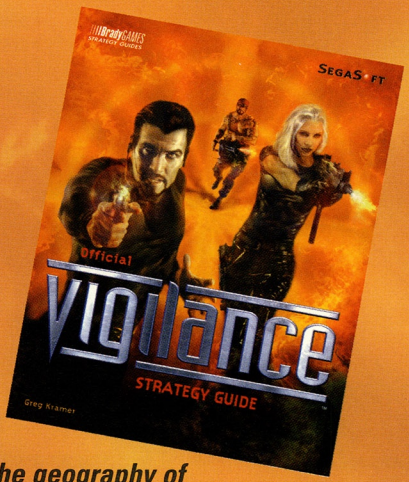
29. Op Center

Quickly dispatch the big, hairy Male Fanatic guarding this operations center. Keep moving to avoid his nasty Grenade Launcher.

After you drop the Male Fanatic, find the CD Slot on one of the main terminals and insert the virus CD. Doing so will complete the mission!



Oh the humanity! The charred remains of this Satellite Dish signal your success on this final mission objective.



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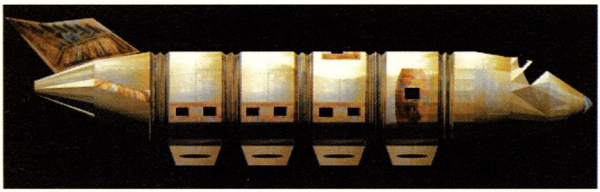
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BIG BROTHER

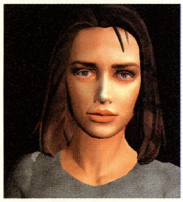
Based on the novel *1984*, *Big Brother* attempts to revive the dying adventure game genre

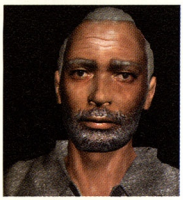




This shot gives an indication of the vast spaces to explore in the game. Big Brother, of course, is everywhere









Character interactions are in FMV to enable players to see the characters' facial expressions

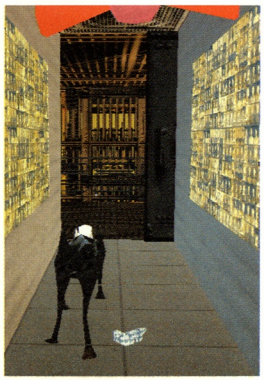
LucasArts' Hal Barwood has made the excellent point before that unless adventure games stay on the cusp of technology, they are doomed as a genre. Enter Media X.

The company's goal is nothing short of redefining the traditional adventure game. To that end, the company has discarded the 2D point-and-click interface that has dominated the genre since the death of Infocom. In its place is a realtime 3D engine and a combination of inventory, slider, and *Mario*-style environment puzzles. To reduce player confusion — a common problem for anyone who has played *Myst* or its descendants — text messages (for instance, "You unlock the steam vent") appear on the screen at appropriate times.

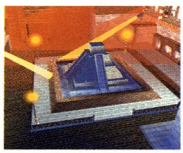
Initially disconcerting, these messages quickly blend in and enable players to concentrate on the game without wondering what they are supposed to be doing. That's good because the game should be exceptionally difficult on its own. Set in George Orwell's *1984* universe, players must rescue their fiancée from the Thought Police. It's a simple goal, but one that requires traversing 12 levels and solving hundreds of puzzles (there were originally 60 levels, but since early play testing indicates that each level takes about five hours, the number was culled).

Graphically, the game should be very impressive. Media X has created an original first-person 3D engine for the game, and, notably, the textures are very, very high-resolution, with little or no blurry filtering noticeable (the game will require a 3D card to run), even when directly against objects. The art direction is equally good: The plot is slightly different from that of *1984*, with a corrupt regime that's crumbling even more than in the book. The disintegration has carried over well — think crumbling brick buildings and steam vents.

Sales of adventure games (and publisher support for them) is down, but if ambitious projects like *Big Brother* and GT's *Wheel of Time* manage to become hits, this genre could quickly pick up momentum. Based on early looks, *Big Brother* has a better chance to help the flailing genre than anything else we've seen in years. NG



High-res textures enable Media X to present a gritty, realistic world





Avoiding the spotlights (top) is key to keeping the Thought Police at bay

FORMAT
PC

PUBLISHER
Media X

DEVELOPER
Media X

RELEASE DATE
Q1 1999

ORIGIN
U.S.

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BENEATH

Presto Studios dumps *Journeyman* and makes its first foray into realtime 3D





Jack Webb, the hero of *Beneath*, is more than just a male version of Lara Croft — he has both more abilities and, thankfully, more polygons

FORMAT
PC

PUBLISHER
Activision

DEVELOPER
Presto Studios

RELEASE DATE
Spring 1999

ORIGIN
U.S.

The Story Room is a unique kind of place. Fifteen feet by 10, with sliding walls on two sides, it can be opened to the hall or closed off for brainstorming sessions. On every wall are detailed drawings and sketches of characters, level designs, and plot details, drawn with such obvious care that they could be in the lobby of Amazing Studios in France. Instead, they're in the equally arty surroundings of Presto Studios in San Diego, the seven-year-old developer that made its money jumping feetfirst into the CD-ROM revolution back in 1992 with *The Journeyman Project*. Since then, there have been two more games based on the lobster-suited time-traveler that rivaled *Myst* in graphical finesse but had little impact on the world of realtime videogames. Presto's latest title, *Beneath* —the subject of all those drawings in the Story Room — is the company's first step into that wider world.

Though she is mentioned often, Lara Croft has long since departed from the design process, providing the initial inspiration before being unceremoniously dumped in favor of something a little different. Enter intrepid adventurer Jack Webb — the clean-cut hero of *Beneath*. Jack must negotiate 12 complex levels, three unique "worlds," and an unusual collection of enemies to save his harebrained scientist father who stumbled, Jules Verne-style, onto a lost polar civilization and was (of course) instantly captured. This sets the scene





The creature models and animation are some of the best you'll see



A leap of faith? Presto hopes *Beneath* will move the genre forward







The detail of both the environments and the enemies gives *Beneath* a technical edge; the Victorian sci-fi plot and unusual characterizations provide added depth — but can it top LucasArts' *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine*?







Jumping is made easier by an intelligent camera and automatic positioning

for a realtime action/adventure that Presto and publisher Activision hope will move the genre forward, courtesy of some powerful technology and neat gimmicks.

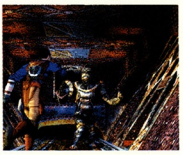
Considering that this is Presto's first attempt at realtime 3D, *Beneath*'s engine (dubbed "Sprint" by the company) affords a remarkable level of detail and variety. Unlike *Tomb Raider*'s setting, the cavernous environments are not based on a 90° grid, so there aren't any uninspired rooms or vast expanses of flat ground. Clever texture wrapping also provides a more organic look (you no longer see the join between polygons), and all the creatures and characters in the game are soft-skin models with pixel-perfect animation. Though *Beneath* has a minimum system requirement of 200MHz MMX, owners of Voodoo^2 cards will at last see a noticeable payoff in the form of more complex models and higher-resolution textures.

But where the technology dovetails most appropriately with the Victorian setting is in the lighting. In *Beneath*, dynamic lighting is more than just a bullet point for the marketing department. Jack wears a motion-powered lamp on his shoulder that shines an incredibly realistic diffuse beam onto the environment, affording the designers more scope when plotting monster attacks; spiders, for example, hide in the shadows and leap down when disturbed by the light.

Another of Jack's own gimmicks is the repel rope — which can be fired, Batman-style, at strategic points to scale walls and to swing across the numerous fissures and cracks that punctuate the levels. Add to that an extended list of moves, and Jack Webb is set to give Lara a run for her treasure when Presto completes *Beneath* in the spring of '99.

The emphasis on story and on a logical plot-based progression through puzzle-laden environments will certainly provide a welcome addition to the genre. What may not be so welcome, from Activision's point of view, are the growing similarities between this game and LucasArts' *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* (**NG 46**) — also due for a spring '99 rollout. NG





Some creatures can be talked to, others are less reasonable



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C3 RACING

After Activision's tepid *Grand Tour Racing*, can Eutechnyx rise to *Gran Turismo*'s level?







Eutechnyx visited Colorado to accurately capture the Southwestern topography seen here; the team scanned in photographs from that trip for the backgrounds

When Activision released *Grand Tour Racing* in the fall of '97, the general consensus was that the game offered a fair amount of variety but lacked the kind of depth provided by other racers. Maybe that's why a year later, developer Eutechnyx has re-emerged with *C3 Racing* (the three Cs stand for Car Constructors Championship), a game that captures the world-tour essence of its last game while providing a deeper racing experience.

C3 Racing offers drivers 30 courses (60 if you count the mirrored tracks), traversing 10 international settings. Nearly every continent is present, with Africa, Peru, China, Italy, and exotic Colorado among the many stops.

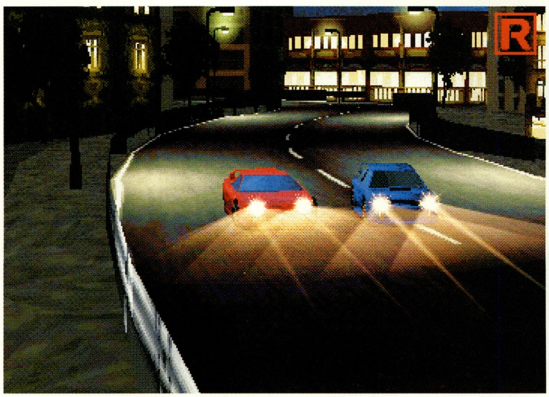
Currently, *C3* features 24 vehicles licensed directly from the manufacturer, varying from the ultrasporty Marcos Mantis to the reasonably affordable Mazda Miata. Most are European and Japanese models from the likes of Renault, Peugeot, Nissan, and Mitsubishi — however, expect to see something red, white, and blue from both Ford and Chrysler. Because the game is still in development in Europe, no marketing decisions have been made about which cars, if any, are going to be added for the U.S. version.

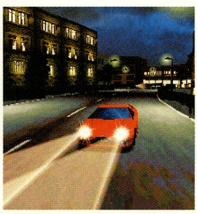
As one looks more closely at *C3*'s

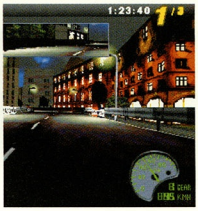


It appears that rainy weather is a prerequisite in any U.K.-developed racing game; cars will also acquire mud on their panels









Night racing through the streets of Monaco shows off *C3*'s volumetric lighting effects

FORMAT
PlayStation

PUBLISHER
Infogrames

DEVELOPER
Eutechnyx

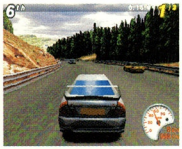
RELEASE DATE
Q1 1999

ORIGIN
U.K.



Damage in *C3* is not just cosmetic (note the smashed window) — it will also affect the performance of the car

Advancement through the game requires more than solid driving, **as you will have to continually fine-tune your car** to increase its performance





Six cars take the course at a time. Several tracks will offer multiple routes and those tricky-to-navigate shortcuts

features, it becomes hard not to draw comparisons with *Gran Turismo*. There's the casual racer's Arcade mode, split-screen racing for two players, and the career-long Championship mode that's very *Gran Turismo*-like in design. Players advance from amateur racer to different professional classes, unlocking more desirable cars along the way. And advancement through the game requires more than solid driving skills, as you will have to continually fine-tune your car to increase its performance. Seventeen variables of adjustment include steering, shocks, springs, tire grip, fender downforce, braking, engine torque, and acceleration. The developer insists that no single adjustment can affect one whole aspect of a car's performance, and the game cannot be won by simply maxing out the engine power and acceleration.

Only 20% of the *Grand Tour Racing* engine has been recycled for this title. As a result, the graphics have taken a leap forward with a high-res screen display of 368x256; there's also the prerequisite reflective surfaces, volumetric lighting, and realtime environment mapping on the vehicles. A new collision damage model affects the car's ability to perform, and a new "second-skin" drawing system can be adjusted to show varying levels of transparency. The result is that objects emerge from the fog without the stuttering pop-in found in many racing games.

But can *C3* really compete with the godfather of PlayStation racing sims? It's doubtful that anyone other than the *Gran Turismo* team can outdo itself, especially when developers are beginning to abandon the aging PlayStation for more powerful systems. But who knows? If Eutechnyx comes remotely close with *C3 Racing*, many speedway junkies will be pleased. NG

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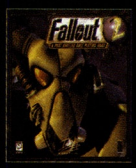
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WARZONE: 2100

Unlike Ion Storm's *Dominion*, *Warzone* makes an effort to improve the strategy genre

Eidos has made very little progress in the realtime strategy genre. *Dominion Storm* was uninspired and failed to capture the core RTS audience, which remains enthralled with *Command & Conquer* and *Total Annihilation*. So how can Eidos divert attention from the competition? In a word: *Warzone*.

The plot is intriguing enough: A technical error in a satellite defense system brings on worldwide destruction, tricking the world's defenses into a suicide pact. The remaining survivors of the holocaust break off into warring bands that spread out to reclaim Earth's lost civilization and technology.

Warzone: 2100 takes place in a true 3D environment, tracking and reacting to every object from stray bullets to snowflakes. Buildings and vehicles blow up, leaving large craters that alter the terrain and directly affect the mobility of ground-based units. Each unit commander guides a team into battle and serves as a brain to designate targets and resources through a complex line-of-sight system — in other words, the game doesn't cheat. Because it is important to protect each commander and the main communications tower at all times, the camera control is fixed on a mouse-look control scheme similar to that in *Quake*, making it easily accessible to first-time strategy converts.



Effects include realistic fire and over-the-top explosions that are unprecedented in realtime strategy games

Of course, the Achilles' heel of most RTS games is the multiplayer mode. *Warzone* should be able to dodge this bullet with support for two to eight players over the Internet or a LAN, as well as link cable support for the PlayStation. Once connected, players can work together in the campaign mode or duke it out on deathmatch terrains.

Warzone: 2100 appears to surpass the current competition both technically and visually, but is that enough to stiff-arm games like *Tiberian Sun* or *Total Annihilation*? The office Magic Eight Ball says, "Outlook good." NG







***Warzone* features more than 2,000 different units to choose from and build**





More than 400 technologies can be discovered throughout the game



There are 24 fast-play mission maps and three large campaign maps containing between six and 10 submission locales

FORMAT
PC/PlayStation

PUBLISHER
Eidos

DEVELOPER
Pumkin Games

RELEASE DATE
Q1 1997

ORIGIN
U.S.



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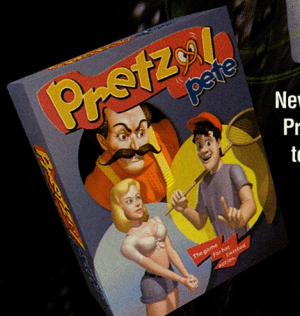
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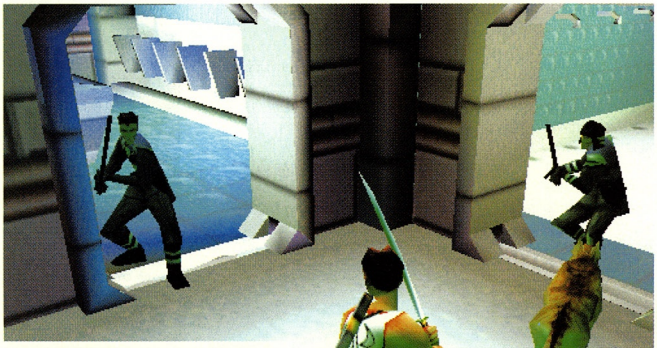
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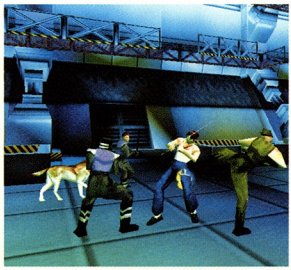
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SABOTEUR

Taking a page or two from *Tomb Raider*, Eidos brings an old Spectrum game back to life









The partnership between Shin and Shuyo, an interesting concept, should provide a fair amount of depth and complexity to *Saboteur*

Capitalizing on the ever-popular 3D action genre, Eidos has enlisted the development talent of the U.K.-based Tigon to re-create the 8-bit gaming experience of the 1984 Spectrum classic *Saboteur*. Some of the founding members of Tigon (*Space Hulk*, *Combat Lynx*) were responsible for the original version of *Saboteur*, but beyond the main ninja character, Shin, the game is anything but a rehash of the old title.

Attempting to successfully walk the thin line between exploration and action, the game follows the adventures of Shin and his dog, Shuyo, as they trek through five different worlds, each encompassing four to five stages and composed of indoor as well as outdoor levels.

Running at a constant 30fps, the game will shift between two modes throughout. During the times that Shin is exploring each level and there are no enemies present, the perspective of the game will mimic that of *Tomb Raider*, allowing the player to solve puzzles, complete objectives, and discover areas. When the player confronts an enemy or group of opponents, the game will seamlessly convert to a fixed-plane view, which borrows heavily from the 2-1/2D fighting genre (*Tekken 3*, *Virtua Fighter*). This particular type of two-fold gameplay has been displayed in recent games such as SCEA's *Spawn: The Eternal*. Tigon and Eidos are hopeful that their exercise of the technology will make *Saboteur* more successful in the execution of split modes.

In gameplay, emphasis will be on both combat and adventure, but the fighting engine within the game features some ambitious elements. *Saboteur* boasts a moves list more comparable to *Virtua Fighter*'s than *Fighting Force*'s, and Shin and his enemies will interact in a variety of ways, using mid, high, and low





Enemies are very smart in this game and highly responsive to their surroundings

FORMAT
PC/PlayStation

PUBLISHER
Eidos

DEVELOPER
Tigon

RELEASE DATE
Q2 1999

ORIGIN
U.K.

attacks as well as grappling moves. Shuyo, though mainly computer-controlled, will also be able to participate in battle by holding down the enemy. The inclusion of weaponry in combat is another interesting concept, and opponents will automatically react in different ways depending on the kind of weapon being brandished and the type of enemy.

In fact, Tigon has placed much emphasis on the intelligence of the computer enemies within the game. Opponents are highly responsive to their surroundings and to the player's presence. If Shin attempts to skirt enemies by escaping a battle, the enemies are intelligent enough to track him down throughout an entire level. Enemies are also very responsive to their positioning in a battle and are fully capable of setting up a pattern for attack that will place them at an advantage over Shin if the player isn't careful.

Not content with providing a mere beat-'em-up, the *Saboteur* team has ensured that players must take full advantage of Shuyo by forcing them to use the dog while solving specific puzzles. Although progression through the game is strictly linear, at this point in development the player must track down items like key cards in order to get from one area to the next. Tigon plans for Shuyo to play a big role in the retrieval of items by allowing the player to command the dog to navigate otherwise inaccessible areas. From the sound of it all, *Saboteur* might just prove to be the company's most ambitious and deservedly anticipated title for 1999. NG

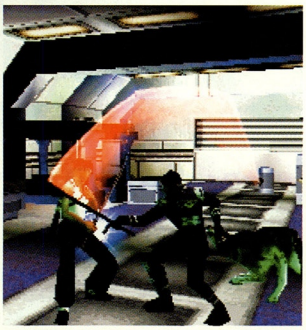






Using a high poly count engine and full skeletal animation on single-skinned characters, *Saboteur* aims to have each character personalized by a large number of unique animations







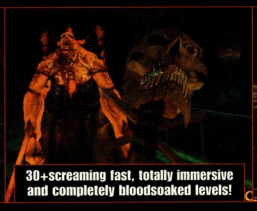


Depending on whether players are dueling with robots, flame shooters, or shape shifters, the method of combat will always adjust to suit the environment and situation





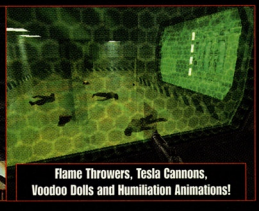
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THQ

NINTENDO 64

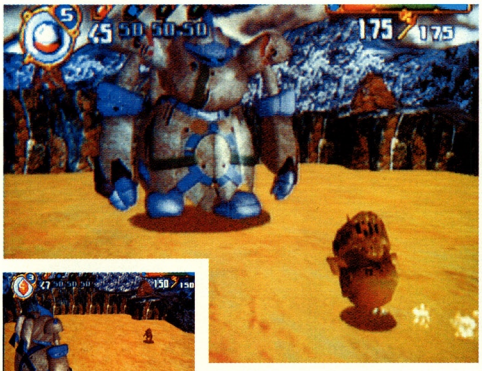
PRIMA

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E.G.G.

Hudson's first Dreamcast game — surprise — won't feature Bomberman





Although the game features some combat elements, there is no disguising its RPG roots. These screens demonstrate Dreamcast's excellent texture capabilities. Some traces of *Bomberman* are evident in the graphic design, of course





Dreamcast's graphic capabilities are shown here in some of *E.G.G*'s flame effects

FORMAT
Dreamcast

PUBLISHER
Hudson

DEVELOPER
Hudson

RELEASE DATE
1999 (Japan)

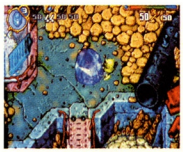
ORIGIN
Japan

Sega's initial Saturn lineup was extremely thin on RPGs, a situation that never really got better and eventually hurt the system's game library depth. Fortunately, things are looking better for the Dreamcast launch. One of the system's most intriguing releases for fantasy fans will be Hudson's *Elemental Gimmick Gear* (or *E.G.G.*), an action/RPG that really demonstrates Sega's and game companies' targeting of a more adult audience with the new system's launch.

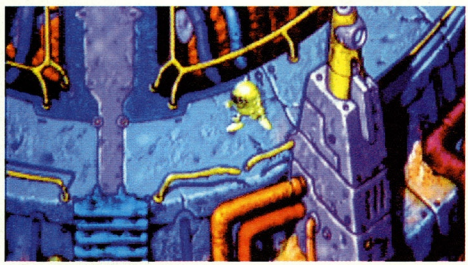
The storyline is your standard Japanese adventure tale. In the Tochion Era of 1365, a scientist discovers an ancient ruin that contains a mysterious sphere. This strange orb, which seems to be some sort of machine, but which features no controls or openings of any kind, is eventually determined to operate on the power of its pilot's soul. As one might imagine, trouble follows, and it's up to players to sort things out with the newfound powers of the sphere. The entire storyline is dark and foreboding and is moved along by breathtaking CGI movies that show up from time to time. The characters in the game are also pretty original in their design and are sure to surprise most fans of the genre.

Gameplay is unusual in that it will consist of both 2D and 3D elements that use the same control interface. Most of the game's more static activities (research and the like) will take place from a 2D point of view, while action sequences (like combat) will take place in a slick 3D world. The real issue here is the use of a standard interface to control characters in both environments, making transitions much easier on the player.

E.G.G. is still a long way from completion (all we can squeeze out of Hudson is that it will release sometime in 1999), but the game definitely shows promise. If Dreamcast developers follow Hudson's example of creating plots and action aimed at the mature gamer, the new system's future will be bright indeed. NG







The backgrounds feature a distinctive cartoon style (above)


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TYCOON II
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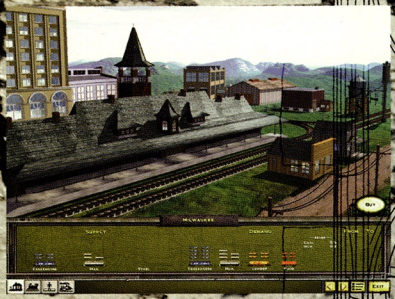


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MILESTONES

Next Generation's monthly update on tomorrow's games

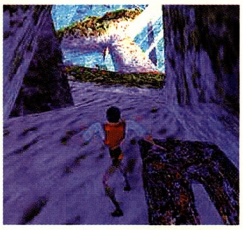
The creators of *Tomb Raider* attempt to recapture the thrill of high seas adventure as well as reclaim their former glory as the pioneers of 3D gaming. However, enterprising developers such as Monolith and Iguana will do everything within their power to take control of the genre. In the war for consumer dollars, one thing is certain — games can only get better.



GALLEON PC













Players take the role of Rhama, a swashbuckling explorer, who embarks on an epic quest to find a mysterious ship. The team members responsible for breathing life into Lara Croft will put their skills to the test as they introduce the most complex realtime 3D animated character yet

QUAKE 64



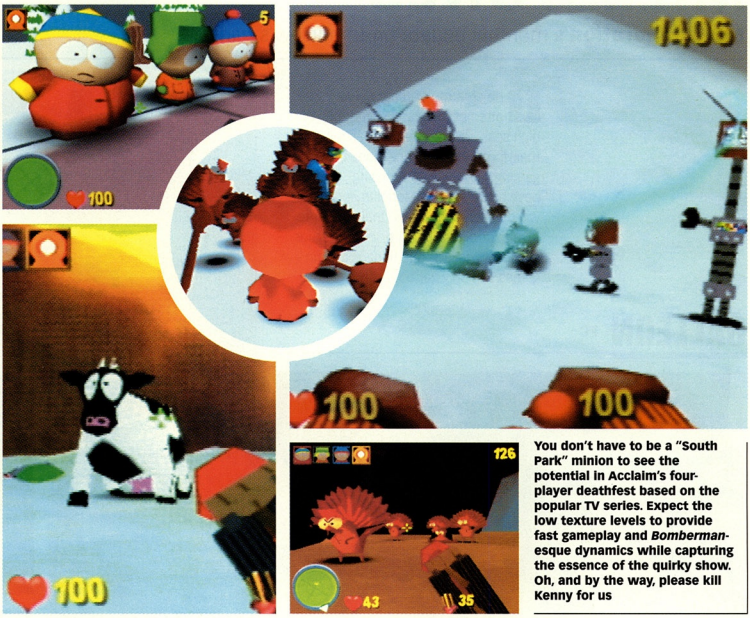
Aaron Seeler Productions is porting its third id Software game to N64 for Activision. Early word is that it's near perfect

F16 AGGRESSOR



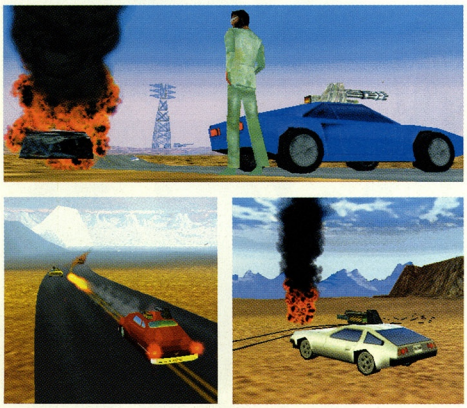
Here's a remarkable F16 simulation, down to the cockpit's animated pilot. It offers over 40 missions in four campaigns

SOUTH PARK N64



You don't have to be a "South Park" minion to see the potential in Acclaim's four-player deathfest based on the popular TV series. Expect the low texture levels to provide fast gameplay and *Bomberman*-esque dynamics while capturing the essence of the quirky show. Oh, and by the way, please kill Kenny for us

INTERSTATE 82 PC



Following the success of *Interstate 76*, Activision is banking on '80s culture to provide the perfect battle atmosphere — where's Bon Jovi?

TEST DRIVE OFFROAD 2 PlayStation



The only game to officially include the Hummer, *Test Drive Offroad 2* from Accolade also offers 19 more vehicles and 12 tracks

SHOGO PC/Dreamcast



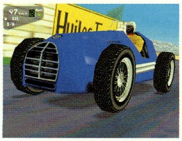
Monolith's testament to the power of its proprietary LithTech engine provides multiple play modes and a strong multiplayer game. With 20 weapons to use on 20 kinds of enemies, it almost doesn't matter that the game provides an intriguing storyline

DJUMP



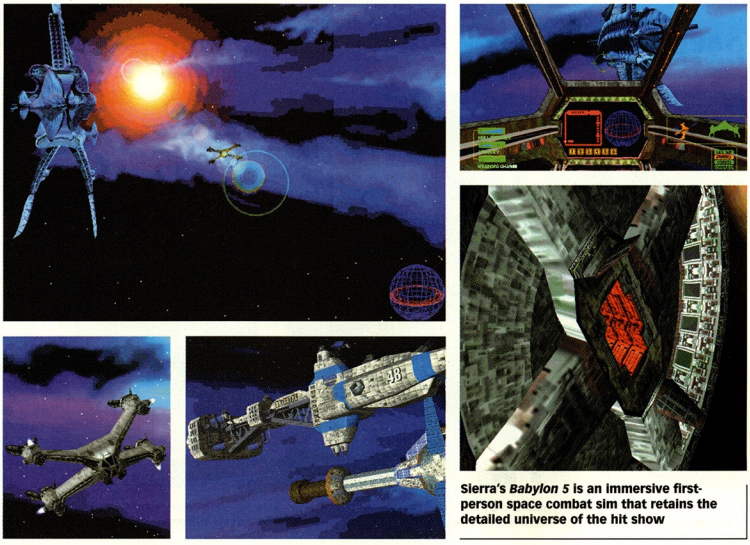
Characters with limbs? Ubi's new platformer is also Dreamcast-bound

MONACO GRAND PRIX



Ubi Soft's *Monaco Grand Prix 2* adds a '50s mode for single-seat racing

BABYLON 5 PC



Sierra's *Babylon 5* is an immersive first-person space combat sim that retains the detailed universe of the hit show

DIABLO 2 PC





Blizzard's second chapter adds five more character classes to help players battle a new Diablo who has risen in the East

WCW-NITRO



THQ's successful series makes its PC debut in time for the holidays

SAVAGE ARENA



Rage Software attempts to capture the essence of such classics as *Speedball*

X-MEN



Let's hope Activision's PlayStation fighter does the comic justice for once

SHAOLIN ROAD



THQ's fighter gives N64 owners another reason to own four controllers

BUST-A-MOVE 4



Natsume is importing the latest PlayStation puzzlefest to U.S. shores

RAYMAN 2 PC/N64

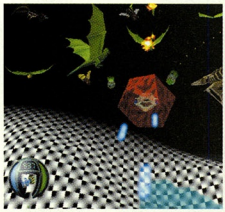






We can't say much about *Rayman 2* that hasn't already been said. It looks and sounds great, and soon we'll find out if it plays great

V2000 PC







David Braben's Amiga classic is reborn on PC. Much of the original design is revisited, but with larger worlds and more enemies

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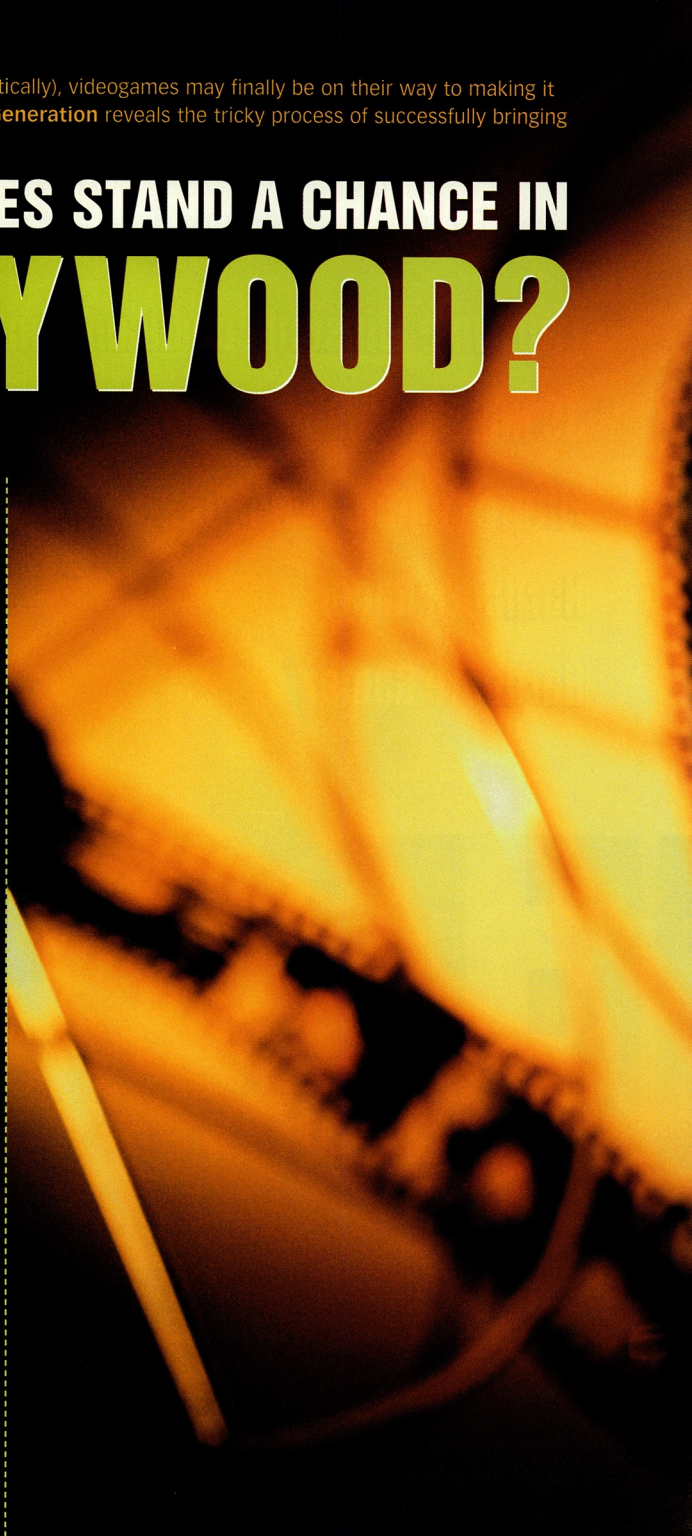
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After a rocky start (financially and critically), videogames may finally be on their way to making it big in Hollywood. This month, **Next Generation** reveals the tricky process of successfully bringing game properties to the big screen

DO VIDEOGAMES STAND A CHANCE IN HOLLYWOOD?



Turning games into profitable movies is difficult when even diehard game fans are too embarrassed to go out to see *Mario Bros.*, *Mortal Kombat*, or *Street Fighter*. Sure, they may watch one of these titles on cable or video, but no one wants to be spotted at the theater waiting to see a movie based on a videogame. Things may be changing, however. With big-name talent, big studios, and big money all being attached to some of the most exciting game titles in years, things are looking up for videogames in Hollywood.

Why the intensified interest from Hollywood despite the dismal showing of previous videogame movies? When the movie industry just barely edges out the videogame industry in profits with the most successful film of all time (*Titanic*), it's going to try everything in its power to bridge the gap. So in typical Hollywood fashion, the studios have decided to throw even more money and talent at the promising videogame licenses. Among the first to collect on the new wave of interest are Eidos and Capcom, with movies already in the works.

Steven Spielberg and George Romero are just two of the big names who may work with videogame-licensed movies. Studios such as Paramount and Fox are taking their responsibilities seriously this time around, and the result could be some of the biggest blockbusters ever.

But let's not forget, Hollywood has its own way of doing things and a long history of missing the point when it comes to understanding the subtleties of, for example, a character like Lara Croft. Will the studios invite the game companies into the creative process, or will this be another one-sided affair leaving the original creators out in the cold?

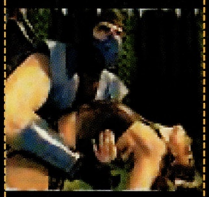
And finally, how will a successful movie influence the future of a game franchise? When a game such as *Resident Evil* finally makes it to the big screen, it could set a new a standard for how that world looks and sounds and acts. Will the game companies be unable to compete, or will the movies lead to more exciting aspects of gameplay and graphics? Could there come a day when game companies and moviemakers work together to bring out each other's best?

Next Generation talks to some of the influential players in the race to bring videogames to the big screen and considers the effects of a full-scale collaboration between Hollywood and Silicon Valley.















Early attempts at bringing videogames to the big screen proved only moderately successful

The first round

From a business perspective, the motivation behind turning a successful movie title into an otherwise generic videogame is easy to understand. The movie license gives the game an automatic head start in name recognition, as well as the unofficial endorsement of those involved in the movie. But what about the rare instance when a videogame transcends the game market and catches the attention of Hollywood? Can this reversal of roles be equally profitable for all involved?

We may never know why the first videogame movies **performed so poorly,** but let's begin with the fact that **they were not especially good**

In 1993, *Mario Bros.* was one of the biggest names in videogames. But this fact was of little help to the movie released that same year. Starring Bob Hoskins as Mario and John Leguizamo as his lovable brother Luigi, *Super Mario Bros.* created about as much excitement in the theaters as Nintendo's *Virtual Boy* did in the game market. Even with master game designer Shigeru Miyamoto taking some of the writing responsibilities, the movie grossed a meager $20 million (peanuts by Hollywood standards). This must have been a very unpleasant shock to the execs at Cinergi Productions, who were undoubtedly expecting the popularity of the game to make the movie a big success.

Next came 1994's *Street Fighter*, starring none other than Jean-Claude Van Damme in the lead role of Colonel Guile. This time it was Universal Pictures taking the gamble with what must have seemed like a can't-lose license from Capcom, but again, the decision to bring a videogame to the big screen proved a poor choice. Edging out *Super Mario Bros.* with a total gross of $33 million, *Street Fighter* was hardly considered a success in the theaters. To put things in perspective, Van Damme's 1994 *Time Cop* grossed more than $40 million in the U.S. alone. *Street Fighter* did go on to become a moderate success in the home-video market, but not enough to really make it worth the investment.

And then came Lawrence Kasanoff's *Mortal Kombat* in 1995. If the man who brought the world the over-the-top action picture *True Lies* couldn't make a success out of a videogame license, who could? And that's just what he did, relatively speaking. Starting with a mere $20 million budget, Kasanoff focused his efforts on the movie's special effects and elaborate costumes, resulting in a tidy profit from a $70 million gross in theaters and another $36 million on video. The success of the original paved the way for *Mortal Kombat: The Annihilation* in 1997 (which enjoyed the top spot on the box office charts for a short few weeks) and a third installment said to be planned for 1999. But still the success at the box office was nothing compared with the success of the games (top-selling titles have grossed up to $100 million), leaving many to wonder why people buying the games did not show the same enthusiasm for the movies.

Why they didn't work

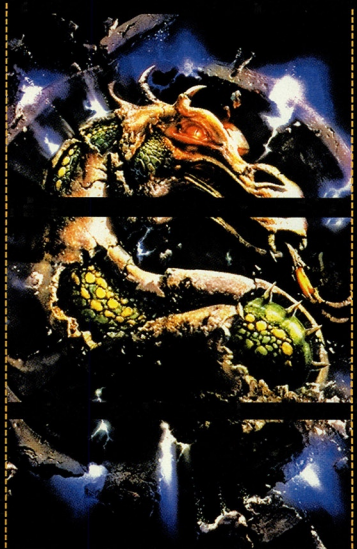
We may never know all the reasons why the first videogame movies performed so far below expectations, but let's begin with the simple fact that they were not especially good. *Mario*, *Street Fighter*, and *Mortal Kombat* may have been amazing videogames, but few would argue that the movies lived up to their potential. Sure, *Mario Bros.* was mildly amusing at times, and who could forget Van Damme's immortal words in *Street Fighter*: "I'm gonna get on my boat, and I'm going upriver, and I'm going to kick that son of a bitch Bison's ass so hard that the next Bison wannabe is gonna feel it." But with movies, as with videogames, the best way to do well is to create an undeniably good product. A high-profile license is beneficial, but it isn't enough to guarantee success.

Perhaps a more troubling reason for the grim performance of videogame movies is that most U.S. teenagers are too embarrassed to go see them. Yes, most teenagers play videogames, but many conceal their devotion in order to avoid being stigmatized as geeks. And going to a movie based on a videogame is a very open statement about a person's interest in that game. That spells trouble for a movie studio looking at the sales numbers of *Street Fighter* and thinking it's got a slam dunk on its hands. Until now, movie studios have failed to recognize that selling videogames is a tricky business, and reaching the skittish target audience requires finesse and experience.

Game companies spend millions of dollars trying to get inside the gamer's head, and even then the products rarely hit it big. For a movie studio to barge in, pick up an impressive license, and think that it has the key to reaching the gaming audience is altogether naïve — a point proved by the performance of earlier studio efforts.

Some people don't know when to quit

Hollywood has never been known to give up easily where potential profits are concerned. Even after the slow start of videogames on the big screen, the studios appear to be pursuing them in big way. Major movie studios are producing about 10 videogame licenses, which read like a who's who in the videogame retail hall of fame, with Eidos' *Tomb Raider* and Capcom's *Resident Evil* leading the way. And that says nothing of game companies such as Square, which is taking matters into its own capable hands with a CG movie inspired by the *Final Fantasy* game series. Namco is also rumored to be working on such a project for its *Tekken* series, but high-ranking sources at Namco deny any knowledge of it.





Why are the studios showing such a healthy interest in the game market again? First of all, the market is enjoying a prosperity that makes it attractive to all savvy business players. When it looks as if money's being made, everyone wants a piece of the pie, and the movie studios are no different. But that's only the beginning. The most exciting reasons for this renewed attention come from the way the game market has developed over the past couple of years.

More movielike

Games are more realistic, immersive, and movielike than ever before. Consider the upcoming *Final Fantasy VIII*. Square is creating a game that owes much of its genius to the movies in its expressive camera angles, emotional plot development, and cutting-edge special effects. And the movie studios are noticing that gamers are demanding more games with the same qualities. Games such as *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* cash in on all the tricks of the movie trade: bigger-than-life settings, mystery, over-the-top action, and sexy lead characters. "Since its conception, we've always thought that *Resident Evil* had a feature-film quality to it. That is why the title has been so successful," says Matt Atwood, a spokesperson for Capcom USA.

The most successful movie studios and producers are likely to be those who work with the game companies to capture the essence of a game

As 3D graphics continue to improve, game companies continue to explore using more realistic characters, making it that much easier for movie studios to take the leap with a game property. While it may have been funny to cast Bob Hoskins as Mario, a game is much more attractive to a movie studio if it can cast its hottest young actors and actresses in roles that further their cool and sexy images. Why, after all, has there been such a hot battle over which up-and-coming Hollywood star will be cast in the role of Lara Croft? And what about the role of Jill Valentine in *Resident Evil*, or even Duke Nukem? These are heroic, sexy characters with emotional depth that many young actors and actresses would consider themselves lucky to play.

It's this merging of videogame and movie culture that people on both sides of the fence are hoping will make the transition for the next wave of videogame movies easier. Larry Gordon and Lloyd Levin, producers for the *Tomb Raider* movie, say that "*Tomb Raider* is based on the rare videogame that is well-suited for film adaptation, not only because of its thematic and visual richness, but also because it's so strongly character- and story-oriented." Whereas earlier attempts, such as *Mario Bros.*, required an almost cartoonlike stretch for the movies, most players have been wondering since they first saw the game what hot young actress would play Lara Croft in the movie.

And it's not just the characters that have become more realistic and movielike. The worlds in which the games are played are more akin to the Hollywood way of doing things as well. Early games were set in an environment of bright colors and often nonsensical settings, which were difficult to represent in the movies, but many of today's games are set in real-world locations. *Resident Evil*, for example, gets as much use from an abandoned police station as Sonic did from the Green Hill Zone, and an abandoned police station is something Hollywood understands (*First Blood*, anyone?).

Who reaps the benefits?

Just about every game company dreams about having its properties turned into multimillion-dollar movie projects, but a few companies are already on the verge of cashing in. And the paths they followed to get to this point are almost too easy to plot. Developing games around traditional movie conventions and character types, companies such as Eidos and Capcom didn't get where they are by accident.

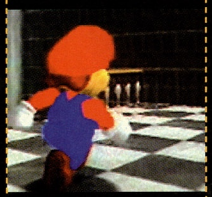
Eidos probably has the biggest head start when it comes to potential box office success. "The interest [in a *Tomb Raider* movie] began once the *Tomb Raider* craze started with the first game," says Keith Boesky, president of Eidos. "We knew we had something that would be great for cross-entertainment mediums when we began fielding interest from Hollywood." Considering the way the mainstream has already embraced *Tomb Raider* and the character of Lara Croft, it seems almost impossible that the movie, which is tentatively slated for the summer of 1999, won't be a serious force at the box office. Eidos has put its trust in Paramount Pictures and writer Brent Friedman to deliver on the good name of the game series. Of course, the big question still is who will play Lara. Several actresses have been considered, including Elizabeth Hurley (the front-runner in fan support), model Nell McAndrew (who has done much of the stand-in work at trade events), and even Sandra Bullock, but no firm decision has yet been made.

When asked how *Tomb Raider* the movie would differ from previous efforts to bring videogames to film, Boesky says, "It will differ in that Paramount, Eidos, and Core plan to make a great movie. The movie will stand on its own as great entertainment. We want the movie to be the same quality relative to all other movies as *Tomb Raider* is to other games." To ensure that the movie is everything Eidos needs it to be, Eidos CEO Charles Cornwall will executive produce the project.

Also in line for a potential box office hit is Capcom with its *Resident Evil* license. Constantin Pictures has reportedly teamed up with horror master George Romero (*Night of the*











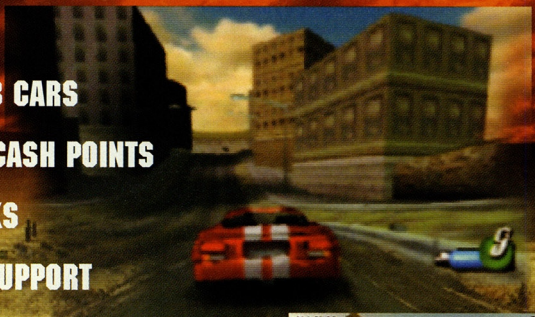


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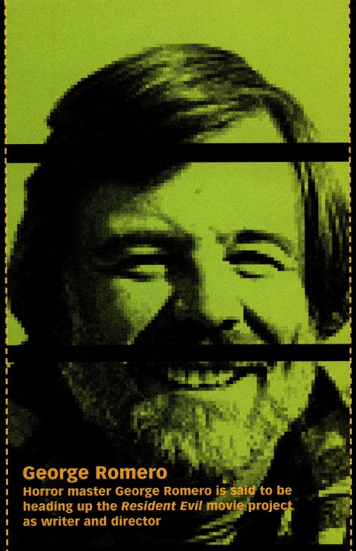




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George Romero
Horror master George Romero is said to be heading up the *Resident Evil* movie project as writer and director

Living Dead, *Dawn of the Dead*) to bring one of the most frightening videogame series to the big screen. If Romero writes the screenplay and directs, *Resident Evil* will doubtless be a first-rate horror movie. Of course, it also doesn't hurt that there has been a recent revival in the horror genre with the wildly popular *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer* movies. With luck, Sega can find similar talent to quickly bring its *House of the Dead* to the big screen (a screenplay for the title is said to be already written).

Origin, with a little help from 20th Century Fox and a $27 million budget, is the furthest along in the development process with its big-screen version of *Wing Commander*. Chris Roberts, the original creator of the *Wing Commander* series, wrote and directed the movie. Through his own production company, Digital Anvil, Roberts is also handling the complex digital effects. For years, the *Wing Commander* games have had a very movielike presentation and featured such high-profile acting talent as Malcolm McDowell and Mark Hamill, making their transition to the big screen less of a stretch than it would be for most games. "The key is storytelling," says Neil Young, general manager of Origin. "We built a foundation with a great concept, a great plot, and great characters. Then you need a great storyteller. We have that in Chris." The storyline for the movie is set in the time frame of the first game, so it will not serve as a sequel to the latest game.

Young insists that Roberts and crew understand the difference between movies and games. "One key difference," he says, "is the amount of preproduction that goes into a feature film. [This early commitment] gives those involved a wealth of understanding of the project from the beginning." The movie, which according to Young features a "*Scream*-like cast of young actors and actresses," is due out in January 1999.

And then there is the third installment of the *Mortal Kombat* movie series, which is said to be in preproduction with producer Lawrence Kasanoff back in the driver's seat. Kasanoff, perhaps the most eager player in the videogame movie field, is also working with 3D Realms and GT Interactive on a movie production of *Duke Nukem*.

Other titles currently being developed include id's *Doom* and *Quake*. Blizzard's *WarCraft* and *Diablo* are also rumored to be in preparation for the big screen. "We're always open to cool ways to license our franchises," says Susan Wooley, a spokesperson at Blizzard Entertainment, "but we're not currently taking time away from game development to work on movie deals. Of course, we would love to do a movie if everything was just right, but we have to be very careful with our licenses. We definitely could have had a movie deal by now if we wanted to." Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that any of these titles will ever come out in film. In Hollywood, a project can be on the verge of being produced for years. But if movies such as *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* take off, these and other videogame movies will probably be put on the fast track to production.

Once this kind of project is actually completed and becomes a success, it may seem as if the game companies behind the licenses would make the biggest profit, but theirs is really the small piece of the pie — the studios collect the biggest checks. Of course, the studios also take the biggest gamble. Whereas an average videogame costs about $1 million to produce, movie studios invest anywhere from $20 million to $200 million (as with *Titanic*). And if the movies fail, it won't be the videogame companies that take the financial beating.

It's the Hollywood way, or ...

In the same way that game developers turned their noses up at the movie industry people who foolishly believed they could jump into the game business and make an instant success of it, Hollywood is not likely to leave the door open to game developers who suddenly fancy themselves moviemakers. And although companies such as Capcom insist that they are a part of the creative process for the movies, tradition tells us that this part will be small. Of course, there are similarities in making movies and videogames, but each discipline takes a specialized and experienced touch. "Once a movie goes into production we [the game company] lose control," says Paula Cook, director of marketing of Midway. "We don't like it, but that's the way it is." This could be a





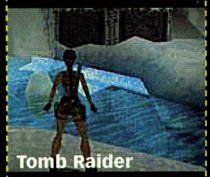


Sarah Michelle Gellar
Sarah Michelle Gellar is just one of many hot young actresses who may soon end up in a videogame-based movie



Resident Evil

Studio: Constantin
Producer: Berd Eichenger
Director: George Romero (unconfirmed) or George Sluizer
Writer: George Romero unconfirmed) or Alan McElroy
Status: Preproduction
Cast: Sarah Michelle Gellar (unconfirmed), Jason Patric (unconfirmed)
Release Date: 1999



Tomb Raider

Studio: Paramount
Producers: Lawrence Gordon, Lloyd Levin, Charles Cornwall (executive producer)
Director: Unknown (Steven Spielberg is rumored to be considering the role)
Writer: Brent Freidman
Status: Preproduction
Cast: Actresses considered include Elizabeth Hurley, Nell McAndrew, Sandra Bullock
Release Date: 1999



Mortal Kombat 3

Studio: New Line/ Threshold Entertainment
Producer: Lawrence Kasanoff
Director: Unknown
Status: Preproduction
Cast: Robin Shou
Release Date: 1999

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Elizabeth Hurley
Who will play Lara Croft in the movie? Some say it's *Austin Powers* star Elizabeth Hurley

difficult lesson to videogame companies eager to take advantage of the recent interest from Hollywood but not ready to stand by while another company runs with their creative properties.

The most successful movie studios and producers are likely to be those who work with the game companies to capture the essence of a game and its characters. Games, like any other artistic creation, are filled with subtle nuances, and it's not always the most obvious aspects that make a game work. Yes, part of the allure of *Tomb Raider* is the big-chested heroine, but her chest is certainly not the only aspect that matters. In fact, in the long run, that's probably the least important aspect. These are the kinds of things the movie studios would do well to understand.

The differences

And then there are the specific movie concerns that the game companies will have to accept. These things may not instantly make sense to the game companies. For example, casting a movie is a skill completely foreign to most game makers. In a game, developers are responsible for creating the perfect cast members from scratch. But in the movies potential cast members must be carefully evaluated: Are the actors and actresses on their way up or down? What are their images and how are these images changing? How will they perform with the other cast members? Are they up to the roles at all? These are just some of the questions that must be considered, all of which are unfamiliar to the game development community.

A successful movie gives **a videogame property**, and **the company that created it,** added credibility in **the mainstream market**

Also at issue is the change from nonlinear to linear storytelling. One of the most exciting aspects of game development is the ability to leave a story open to the player's interpretations, choices, and abilities. A movie, on the other hand, is told in a linear fashion with decisions already made for the audience. It takes specialized skills to deliver a satisfying experience with each approach. Game developers are specifically trained to let players take control or at least believe they're in control. In Hollywood, the moviemakers are in control all the way, and they want viewers to sit back and take the ride. This difference could provoke difficult questions about the actions of a videogame character on film.

Consider this example: A movie hero, based on a videogame character, finds himself in a room with an injured ally. In a videogame, the player might have the choice to help or protect the ally, finish the ally off, or simply keep going. And ultimately in the game, this decision will probably mean very little. In a movie, however, the significance of the scene is far greater. What a character in a movie chooses to do in the very same situation says volumes about that person's worth as a human being. So decisions about this kind of action must be made very carefully. These decisions are most often going to be made by the movie studios because the studios — not the game developers — understand their effects.

The talent

This is just a small sample of the issues that a movie studio considers when it commits to a project. To resolve these issues successfully, a studio must depend on established talent. In the game industry, when Shigeru Miyamoto is connected to a game, everyone instantly expects something great. So too is the effect in the movie industry of names like Steven Spielberg, George Romero, and Lawrence Kasanoff. The possibility that players of this caliber are involved in these projects says a lot about the studios' commitment to videogame movies.

If Hollywood and the game industry are going to have the long and successful friendship that they seem to be initiating, each side will have to accept and respect the strengths of the other. "Our main concern is to ensure that the best motion picture possible is made," says Capcom's Matt Atwood concerning *Resident Evil*, and it's this commitment to the goal that will have to come first if the results are going to be good. Games and movies can both be amazing creative endeavors, but they are not the same thing, and they each require a specific and seasoned touch.

The aftereffects

What happens after a videogame license becomes a colossal success on the big screen? Once the money's been counted and the last of the T-shirts sold, what becomes of the property? This is an interesting question for game developers. Sure, the name recognition will be greater and the games will be in place to make even more money, but the image of the characters and the license in general could be altogether different after a successful movie.

Consider the identity-defining choices a studio might make for a character. These decisions might need to be addressed in the next game. Maybe it no longer makes sense to give the player a choice of leaving behind an injured ally. Would Indiana Jones leave behind a friend? And what about the way a character looks in the movie and the game? A classic example is the *Street Fighter* movie, which spawned the very ill-received *Street Fighter: The Movie*, a game with digitized images of the film's actors. The decision to use such images proved to be a poor one, but the game developers were forced to face that problem because of the movie. And if movies



Duke Nukem

Studio: Threshold Entertainment
Producer: Lawrence Kasanoff
Director: Unknown
Status: Preproduction
Cast: Dolph Lundgren



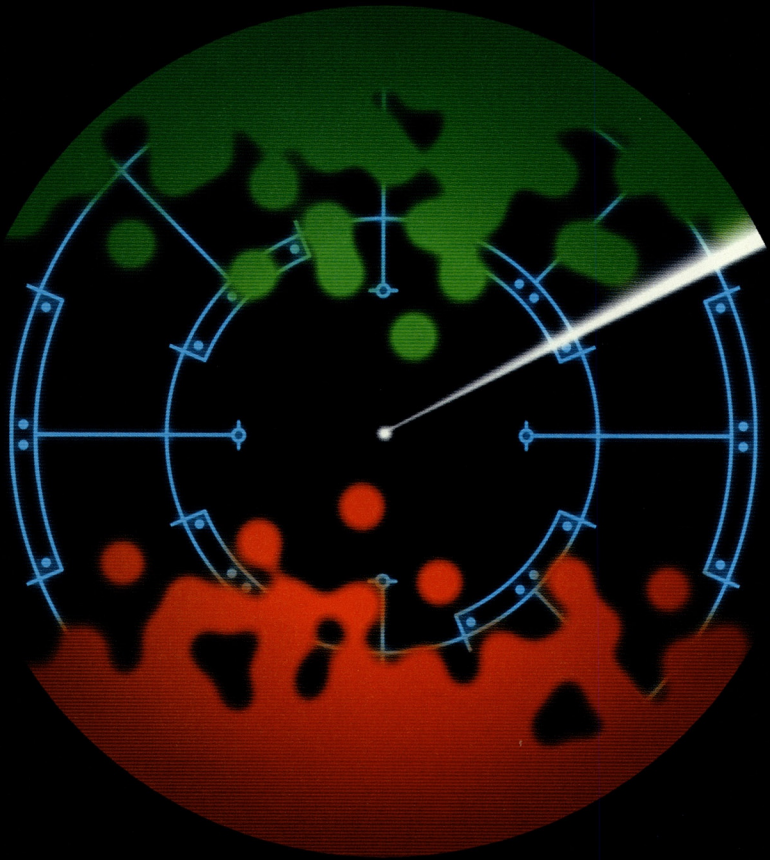
Doom

Studio: TriStar Pictures
Producers: Dino Conte, Moe Lospinoso, Walter Hamada (executive producer)
Director: Unknown
Writers: Ron Mita, Jim McClain
Status: In development
Cast: Unknown
Release Date: 1999



Wing Commander

Studio: 20th Century Fox
Producers: Todd Moyer, Jean-Martial Lefranc (executive producer)
Director: Chris Roberts
Writers: Kevin Droney, Mike Finch
Status: Post-production
Cast: Freddie Prinze Jr., Matthew Lillard, Saffron Burrows, Jurgen Prochnow, Tcheky Karyo, David Warner, David Suchet, Ginny Holder
Release Date: January 1, 1999



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Resident Evil





Night of the Living Dead

It's not too difficult to see where a cinematic version of *Resident Evil* could be heading

and games really take off together, future game developers will face similar challenging questions.

No one can say exactly what issues will arise after a successful videogame movie, but certainly there will be some sticky ones. For example, if *Tomb Raider* proves to be a huge movie success, and a whole new audience learns to associate Lara with the face of the actress chosen to play her rather than the 3D Lara that everyone knows today, how then does Eidos move ahead with its own marketing of the character? Can there really be two Lara Crofts? Can the games and the movies really be kept separate? And even if they could, would that make good marketing sense?

And the issues don't stop there. It's no secret, despite how far realtime graphics have come, that movie special effects are still more realistic than anything you're going to find in a videogame. So will the next *Resident Evil* game be a letdown if it doesn't meet the same visual standard of the movie, or will gamers simply understand the difference and accept each for what it is?

For the most part, because the videogame movies of the past have never come close to outshining their videogame counterparts, these questions have not arisen, but things could be different for some of the movies in development.

The benefits

What about the good stuff that would come with a huge success at the box office? Although there are many possible pitfalls, there are also many potential payoffs. The most obvious is money. "A successful movie always makes for successful game sales," says Capcom's Atwood of the upcoming *Resident Evil* movie. Money has the potential to improve a lot of things, including all aspects of game development. A big success at the box office could conceivably translate into a better game.

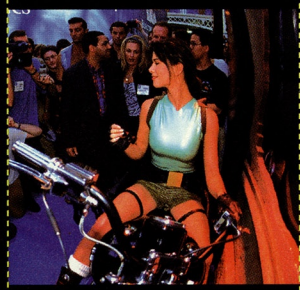
Beyond the financial return, a successful movie also gives a videogame property, and the company that created it, added credibility in the mainstream market. For years,

Jeremy Smith on Lara Croft









Model Nell McAndrew was once considered an option for the part of Lara Croft in next year's movie, but has since been ruled out

Recently **Next Generation** caught up with *Tomb Raider* creator Jeremy Smith of Core to get his thoughts on the movie and what it means to him and the future of Lara Croft.

Next Generation: Does seeing Lara Croft heading for the big screen further legitimize all the hard work you've done over the past couple of years?
Jeremy Smith: Without question. We were all very flattered that a movie studio was even interested in Lara, let alone actually producing a movie.

NG: Did you know from the beginning that *Tomb Raider* would eventually end up on the big screen?
JS: It's something when you start any character-based game that you have in the back of your mind, but normally it's only a dream.

NG: What kind of creative involvement are you interested in having for the movie?
JS: One of the key reasons we went with Larry Gordon Entertainment was [Larry's] ability to allow us the input we required in the movie. This was a critical part of the agreement that we now feel very comfortable with. Paramount is a cool company to be working with and Larry Gordon and Lloyd Levin are great producers.

NG: What is your greatest fear about how Paramount handles the character of Lara Croft?
JS: We hope that because of our agreement they will be unable to do anything too bad, as we will be involved in the loop. Otherwise the list is endless. I'm sure you can imagine how easy it would be to seriously get it wrong. However, they are in the movie business, and to a certain degree we have to be guided by their expertise.

NG: How do you expect the movie to affect future game development in the *Tomb Raider* series?
JS: We don't really see it having too large an impact on our development plans. What we do see is the Lara franchise reaching even more people, who we hope after seeing the movie will want to experience Lara within a videogame.



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game companies have been battling to reach more of this market. A successful movie could pique the attention of people who have never made a commitment to gaming. And again, more business for the game companies means a healthier industry that produces bigger and more creative projects.

But perhaps the best thing that could come from a string of successful videogame movies is a closer working relationship between the movie studios and game companies. With each camp working feverishly toward creating the most thrilling visual and aural experience, a combined effort could bring about advancements heretofore unimagined. Consider the resources of the movie industry combined with the technical mastery of game programmers combined with the almost inconceivable efforts of movie effects houses, and a very exciting picture emerges. Pitfalls aside, this new wave of videogame movie projects may be the first step in an exhilarating new era of game and movie development.

The summer of 1999

As we stand on the verge of a burgeoning relationship between Hollywood and game companies, we are, no doubt, excited by the possibilities to come. Could this represent the first truly positive connection between Hollywood and Silicon Valley? With Hollywood's help, could the game industry actually lead the way to a new revolution in entertainment? It's all possible. And then again, perhaps we're in store for nothing more than a collection of even less profound videogame movies than what we've seen in the past — the kind of movies that will lead to a dead end for Hollywood and game companies working together. Either way (or more likely somewhere in between), it's always exciting to see what happens when two creative forces come together. The truth will be revealed in the summer of 1999. NG



No matter who plays Lara, *Tomb Raider* may well be one of next summer's biggest blockbusters

Taking matters into their own hands

While companies such as Origin, Capcom, and Eidos are going the traditional live-action route with their movie projects, others are looking to their own computer graphics talent pool for an alternate way of getting their properties to the big screen.

Square's first feature film

Soon after setting up shop in Honolulu, Square announced plans to create a full-length CG movie "inspired by" its *Final Fantasy* series. In fact, getting into the movie business was one of Square's primary motivations for settling in Honolulu, which bridges the gap between Japan and the film industry of Los Angeles. The upcoming feature film, which is commonly referred to as the *Final Fantasy* movie (although Square insists that the movie is not based on any of its games and may not even carry the *Final Fantasy* name), is currently in development in the Hawaii office.

Although the game development side provides some crossover help, the feature film maintains its own substantial staff of production experts. "There are over 100 people on the feature film," says Jun Aida, vice president and producer at Square, "the majority of whom have a background in film production."

Although the company is tight-lipped about the project, recent games, such as *Parasite Eve* and the upcoming *FFVIII*, demonstrate Square's savvy when it comes to moviemaking. Square is producing the movie independently but has been negotiating with a major movie studio for distribution rights. As of yet, there is no official release date for the film, but there is little chance of it coming out before 2000.

Tekken: the movie

Although Namco is primarily known for its amazing games such as *Tekken* and *Rage Racer*, the Japan-based company has no shortage of talent when it comes to CG animation. Over the years, the *Tekken* series has featured some of the finest CG animation to be found anywhere, and although the company will neither confirm nor deny the existence of a full-length movie project based on the series, rumor has it that something along those lines is in development. If the movie lives up to the work featured in the games, Namco could be very dangerous competition to more firmly established movie studios.

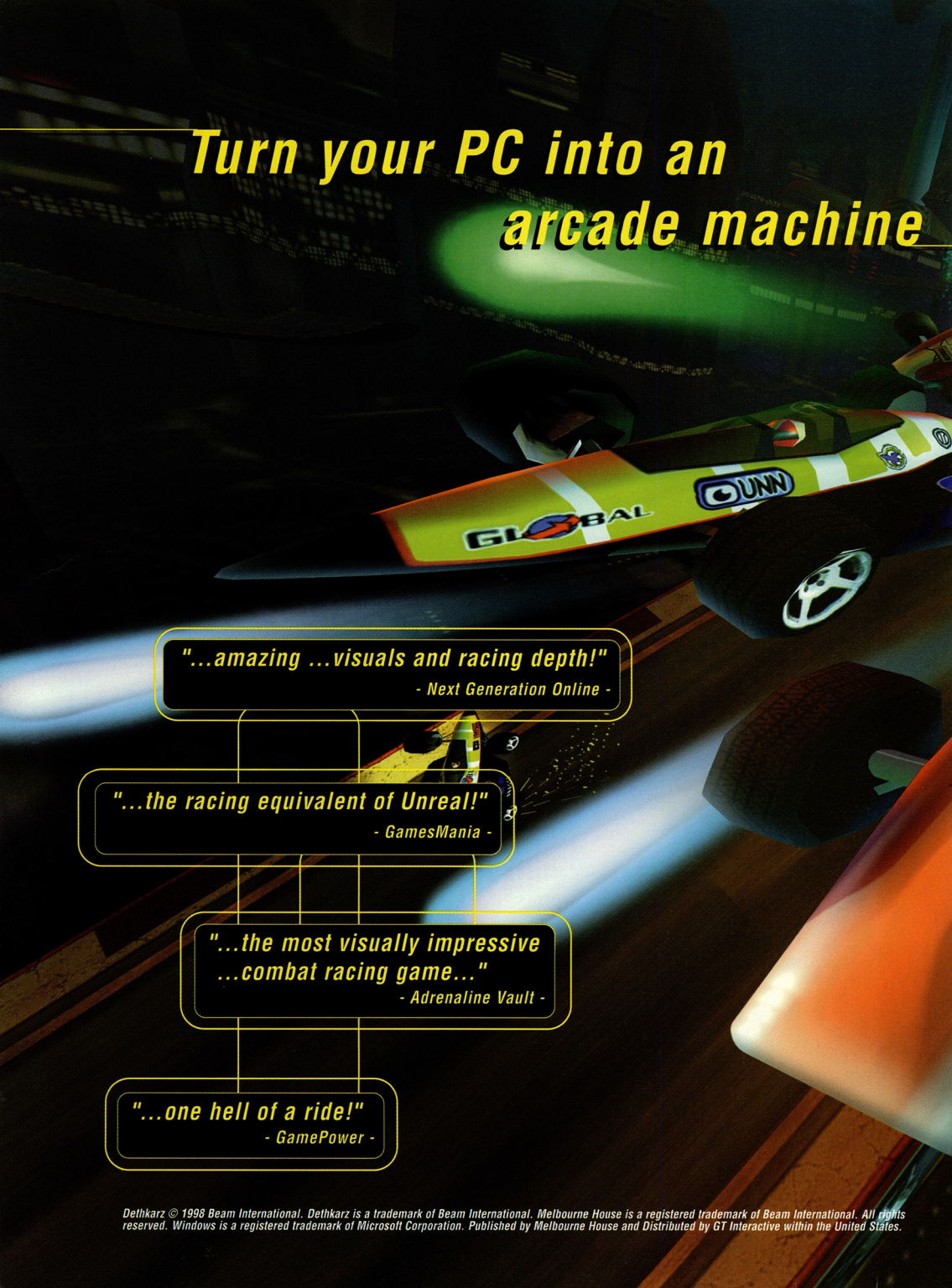








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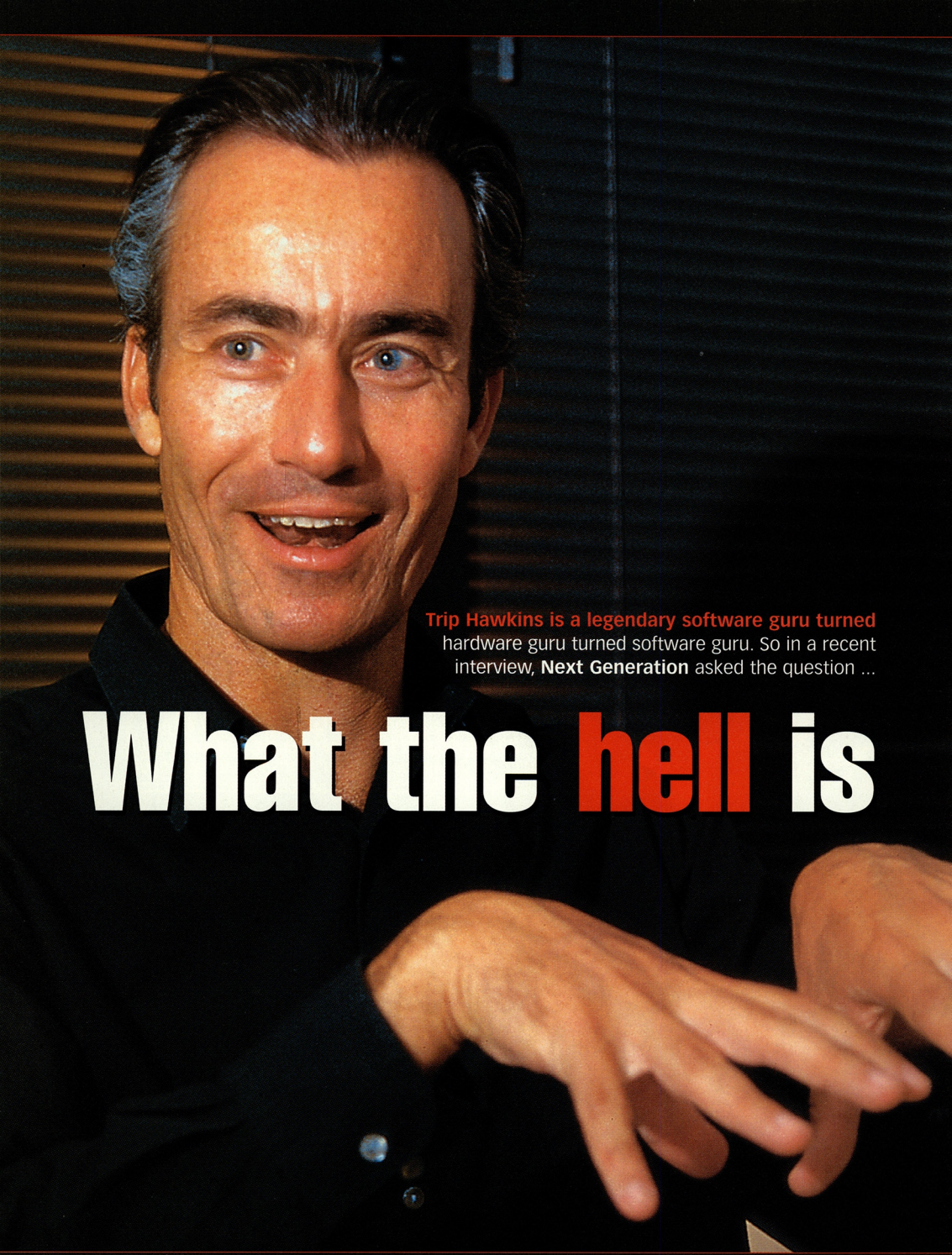
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Trip Hawkins is a legendary software guru turned hardware guru turned software guru. So in a recent interview, **Next Generation** asked the question ...

What the hell is

Trip up to now?

Imagine you initiated the Gathering of Developers and you're trying to explore new ways of publishing games. Or you're VM Labs and you want to learn how (or how not) to break into an incredibly competitive hardware market. Talk to Trip Hawkins — he's seen it all before.

Back in the 1980s, Trip Hawkins helped to build Electronic Arts into the biggest entertainment software developer in the world. In the early 1990s, sensing the possibilities of CD-ROM and a growing dissatisfaction with the Sega/Nintendo duopoly, Hawkins shifted his focus to hardware. But his 3DO platform, dogged by a lackluster launch, expensive pricing, and a lack of showcase games, never achieved its potential. In 1997 3DO sold the follow-up technology, code-named M2, to electronics giant Matsushita. Hawkins' company was renamed 3DO Studios, and his focus shifted once again to software.

With the game industry currently overshadowed by question marks, it seemed the ideal time to visit the temple of Trip Hawkins, a veteran entering his third decade in the videogame business.

Next Generation: You've spoken about the increasing length of time and resources game development consumes and how you're trying to create a publisher here at 3DO that manages those difficulties. But isn't there a key trend in the way talented people are leaving publishers to start up their own studios? For instance, Ron Gilbert goes off to set up Humungous Games and finds his own star staff like Chris Taylor [*Total Annihilation*] leaving in turn.

Trip Hawkins: Well, when you are in a climate where it looks really easy to start your own company and then sell it for a huge amount of money, people will try to do that. It was that way in the early '90s, but it's not that way now. Taking Ron Gilbert as the example, he sold the company and is now an employee of GTI. He is back in a big company.

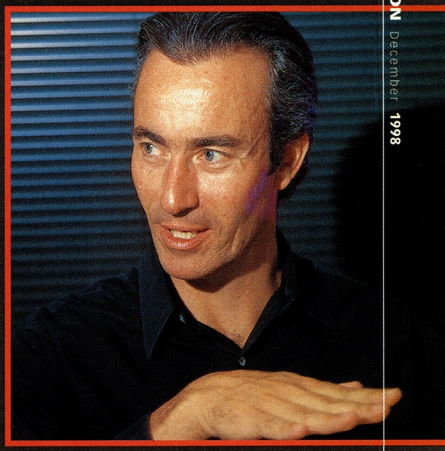
NG: So it's just about money?

Trip: If you wanted to explore Ron Gilbert's reasons, obviously you would have to ask him. But I think people will leave a place if they don't like working there, and they will join a place if they think they will like working there. In our case, here at 3DO we try to maintain a feeling of being a really small company and a feeling of real intimacy.

NG: Is it because the industry is one of heroes, with people like Peter Molyneux, for example? One of the individuals who helped Molyneux set up Lionhead after leaving Bullfrog has already gone on to start his own studio ...

Trip: I think there are a lot of people who are grabbing at things and not maintaining a commitment. That may work for some people, but it's not going to work for most people. I think in this industry now, team play is more effective than a prima donna approach to creative thinking.

In music, what works is the prima donna. A musical performer can go in and record a hit song in a day. So it makes more sense for that industry to be focused on looking externally for millions of voices that may have the next great song in their head. But if you look at what we do now, there is so much more focus on the engineering — and the need to keep a group of people working together over a long period of time — that it makes more sense to try to figure out how to build that systematically.



NG: Another entity that is currently making parallels with the music industry is the Gathering of Developers. Couldn't promoting development teams and offering an overarching structure for them to operate within be the best way forward?

Trip: I think what it's trying to do is exactly what I did successfully in the 1980s with Electronic Arts. It certainly is not a new idea. It doesn't work as well as it appears at surface value either, in that if all these independent groups are being funneled through one entity, and yet independent groups have complete creative freedom from each other, you are not going to get any consistency. Also, at least in my view, I don't think G.O.D. is being that selective.

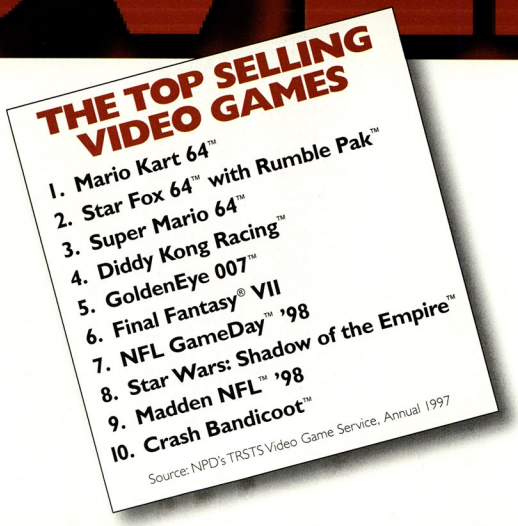
NG: Do you think that creative people are as important these days?

Trip: The creativity is still important, but now you have to add a really systematic engineering discipline to it. I think G.O.D. will have some good products, and it will also have some products that don't sell. It has to get out there and show enough products to discover that not everything it puts that label on is going to be a best-seller. The reason it doesn't yet know that is because it is a bunch of developers. I mean, historically, any time something that developers are involved in doesn't sell, who do you think they blame? They don't blame themselves, I guarantee that.

One of the reasons the strategy worked so well in the '80s with Electronic Arts was that in those days one guy by himself could do the whole thing. I consciously wanted to find the prima donna, I wanted to find the guy who was so determined to prove that his idea was better that he was going to kill himself to do it. That was the kind of passion that really great things came from. But back then you still had the opportunity to go into a fairly undeveloped retail channel and put all these things on a shelf and they would all have their shot.

The chance of success is not very good. Nobody should be surprised when a new hardware platform doesn't meet with success

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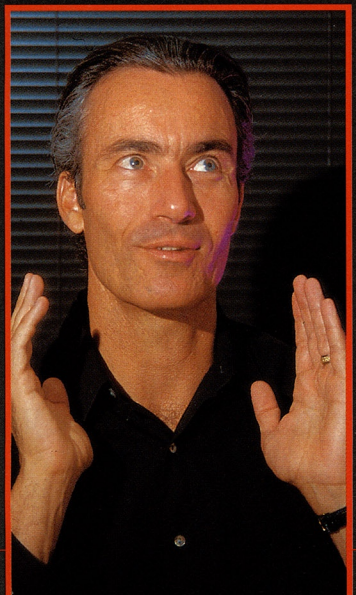
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NG: With so many truly good games out already, the challenge seems to be to rise above the noise level.
Trip: That's part of the cleverness with games like *Army Men*. We are connecting it to something people are already familiar with. Obviously what is clever about a game like *Heroes of Might and Magic III* is that it's part of a series that people are already familiar with. You just can't understate how important it is to create some kind of connection.

NG: Do you think that it's a shame that the growing user base seems to be reducing the number of successful titles?
Trip: I don't think it is reducing it. There are a lot of games on the PC market, but I would say probably the same or a larger number of them can be commercially successful. There has been a lot of growth in the size of the libraries for Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation, with quite a few titles being good-selling games.

NG: Well, in the U.K. last year, 17 out of the top 20 PC games were sequels.
Trip: The way I look at it is when you make a sequel you can't sell them the same game because they already own it. What they want is to continue to play the game that they know they like. It shouldn't surprise us. If you look at our parents or their parents and the kind of games that they play, they will pick a sport like golf or a game like chess, and they will play it their whole life. If somebody is a golfer, they might well try another course or buy a new set of clubs, but they still want to play the same game.

NG: That's an interesting way of looking at the whole issue …
Trip: In England, there are obviously going to be a lot of football games. That is largely the most important subject matter in sports that people are going to want to buy games based around. There are going to be manager games, action games, and strategy games. The issue isn't so much why are the best-selling charts dominated by sequels, the issue is how are you going to make a game in a category that somebody cares about that is going to compete with what is already established there.



NG: Where would you rather be to address these issues, EA or 3DO? That's to say, do you see the whole hardware thing as a bit of a detour you wish you hadn't taken?
Trip: Well, first you have to start with why I have done the things I have done, and it comes back to my commitment to the gamer. I have been here for 25 years trying to make the gaming experience the best it can be, and I will probably be here for another 25 years doing just that. With Electronic Arts, things had matured to a point where it seemed like the thing that I could do that would be most beneficial to the gamer was to get involved and help push an agenda that was more on the hardware side of the business, and that led to the creation of 3DO. And when it became clear that 3DO wasn't needed by the industry to push that agenda, and that other companies like Sony had in fact very successfully helped the industry to move forward, then it was possible for me to go back to my first love — making the software.

I think you can compare Electronic Arts to any large media group like Time Warner. 3DO is more like Lucasfilm. It's smaller, it's much more focused on a handful of areas, and I am personally very involved in the creation of products.



NG: You get involved creatively?
Trip: Totally. A lot of the games we make are my ideas, or if it's not my idea I'll make significant contributions to the design. It's a lot of fun for me to be able to work with creative giants like several of the people we have here.

NG: Looking at the 3DO hardware platform, you've suggested Sony achieved what you set out to do. Do you think in retrospect there are things you could have done to put 3DO in the position Sony enjoys today?

I wanted to find the guy who was so determined to prove that his idea was better that he was going to kill himself to do it. That was the kind of passion that really great things came from

Trip: It's hard to say. I would point to three things that I think were critical to how things turned out. One is that I think Sony and Nintendo both have very comprehensive business strategies that are orchestrated by one company. In this industry that's a big advantage. It was a lot harder with 3DO to be orchestrating a federation of companies. The second factor is that we were very early in the use of CD-ROM technology. With 3DO being such an early adopter of that technology, it was much more expensive, and in hindsight now I would probably say too expensive. But we are not the only company that discovered that. Certainly, Philips with CDi and AAC with TurboGrafx …

NG: Commodore's ill-fated CDTV …
Trip: There were quite a few attempts, and they were all too costly. Sega also struggled with Saturn, and even Sony struggled until it was able to bring the price down.

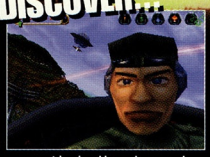
The other thing that was a big problem from a costing point was the cost of computer memory. A 32-bit system

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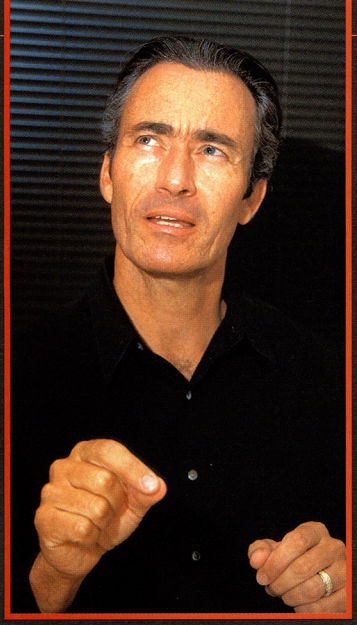
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like 3DO used a lot more RAM than the previous generation had, in part because we were using a CD.

NG: It was a terrible time to do that, with RAM being so much more expensive.
Trip: Normally you can count on RAM going down in cost by 50% every two years, and ironically from 1992 to 1995, computer RAM went up in price. The sales rate of Sony PlayStation hardware really took off in 1995, and that's because it went ahead and made the commitment to bringing the price down.

Memory prices just dropped through the floor in early 1996. Sony had very good timing and was being aggressive about its pricing, and then having the memory prices change suddenly provided fuel for that strategy. Basically, by that time 3DO's window of opportunity had already passed.

NG: There have been criticisms of 3DO's third-party support, which obviously Sony did brilliantly. Do you think that was a factor?
Trip: I don't think that was a factor at all. I think in hindsight, if you went and talked to a lot of people now and made fair comparisons, I think you will find that people were generally pleased with our third-party support. In fact, some of the executives of Sony told me that they copied elements of their licensing program from what we did.

NG: With Project X, VM Labs seems to be doing a very similar thing to what you tried with the 3DO platform — working with a federation of manufacturers with the common thread being DVD and MPEG-2 decoder chips instead of CDs. Do you think it's got a chance?
Trip: I have been in the business since it began, and there have been over 200 different incompatible formats. You can pretty much count the big successes on your fingers, so the chance of success is not very good. Nobody should be surprised when a new hardware platform doesn't meet with success.

NG: What does a new hardware vendor need to do?
Trip: I think the way the market works now, you have to have good gaming technology, but you have to introduce it at a very aggressive price point and you have to have strong software support, and it's very hard to get all those elements going for you on day one. Sony is in a strong leadership position right now. It has a CD machine, which means its life-cycle will be different from the previous cartridge machines. The cartridge machines get killed off very rapidly because of the inventory risk on the cartridges scaring everybody off.

When Sony brings out its next generation machine, it will not only be the best technology that anybody can do — there is no reason for them to bring it out unless that's the case — but I believe it will be very straightforward for them to support DVD, movie playback, and Internet access. And if it chooses to do that, it's going to make it very hard for anybody to compete.

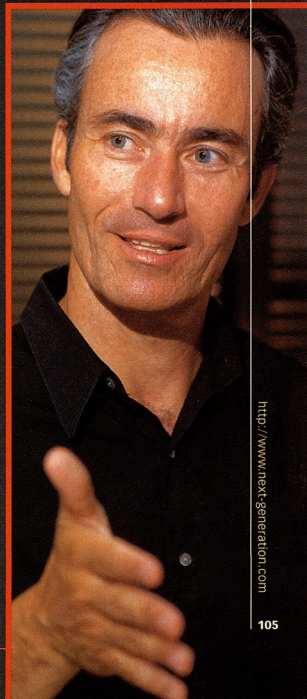
NG: How do you prepare for that uncertainty?
Trip: At least in the short term, you really have to look objectively at what Sony can do — and what Nintendo can do as a strong number two. From our perspective we are a smaller company, and we don't really have the resources to support every platform anyway. The first priority for us is to create some great products and get them established in the minds of the consumers, and the second priority is to get those franchises onto multiple platforms. We also want to get in position to be a strong supporter for Sony's next generation machine, and beyond that, as with any company, it is very hard to try to bet on all the horses in the race.

People want to continue to play the game they like ... If somebody is a golfer, they might try another course or buy a new set of clubs, but they still want to play the same game

NG: You've previously suggested that a set-top box scenario will come about eventually, but you seem to think it's going to take the leadership of Sony to create the demand, rather than the demand arising — which must be what VM Labs, for example, is banking on.
Trip: Well, what the consumer thinks they are buying is a movie player. They are more likely to want to buy a movie player that is a Sony brand. If they are buying a movie player — but it's a lot more expensive than the other movie players because it has got a whole bunch of videogame hardware in it — the only thing that is going to make them choose to buy it is if the hardware company underwrites the manufacturing cost by just losing money on it initially, which Sony has proved it is willing to do because it has the software business on back end.

NG: You can't do that if you've got a federation.
Trip: Well, if the way the federation works is that the hardware companies don't have a tremendous economic incentive to lose money on hardware, then you're right, it won't work.

NG: What about Sega's Dreamcast. Do you think it's got a chance?
Trip: I think everybody knows Sega is not the company it once was. At the same time, it is a great software company, but you need to look at its track record as a consumer hardware company, and you need to look at the requirements for success in the market. Again,



looking at Sony as a competitor, by the time Dreamcast comes out, Sony will have the PlayStation out at $99 with a great software library, and it will have already announced the next generation machine — which is undoubtedly going to be superior technology to what anybody else is doing, and it has DVD support for it as well. That is going to make it hard for anybody, no matter how strong your brand is.

NG: Do you think Sega has played its hand too soon?
Trip: It is hoping that there are some customers out there that have had a PlayStation long enough and are ready to get a new machine. I think that is the right thing to do, that's the right place for them to focus, but it is still a narrow window.

If the gaming console has some actual family value, if it is not just a toy, if you can use it for electronic mail and checking out web sites, then that is one chunk of value

NG: Do you think Sega could go the same way 3DO did and become a software company? That would seem to be one of its strengths …
Trip: People have speculated about that for years, including people at Sega. With Sega being as good as it is at arcade games and software, it's a little like being as good as the Disney company at making animated films and then releasing them on home video. Sega making consumer hardware is like Disney deciding it should only release its home movies on a proprietary Disney video format. That's what makes it an interesting question. It has some success with proprietary hardware, but it has also limited the software market share by not being on the other formats.

NG: With Dreamcast including a modem and Sony also likely to offer one with the next machine, do you think it might be the time for a multiplayer game, such as your own title *Meridian 59*, to simply explode? If there's an installed base of, say, five million, and all a user has to do to log on is click a button to join?
Trip: When you say five million, you have hit on the right



thing. Everybody already had a PC before they started using the Internet, and you need to go out and sell a lot of console machines and have a large installed base of them before you introduce the modem card. And when you first introduce the modem card, probably the right starting point is just to support a browser, which allows you to access web sites and to do email. And then once enough people have bought that, you've got an installed base for a new kind of gaming. But I think you have to take it step by step.

NG: It's like the classic fax machine example — the first fax machine was worthless because there was no one to fax messages to. Every machine after that becomes more useful.
Trip: Right, it's a critical-mass problem. Of course, everybody is going to try to push that angle. I don't believe the Internet angle on a console is enough to cause the sale of the machine. Historically, you are dealing with a product purchase category that is predominantly male. Any guy typically has to go to a "board of directors" and get approval for the purchase, and that is either going to be mom or the wife. But if the gaming console has some actual family value, if it is not just a toy, if you can use it for electronic mail and checking out web sites, then that is one chunk of value.

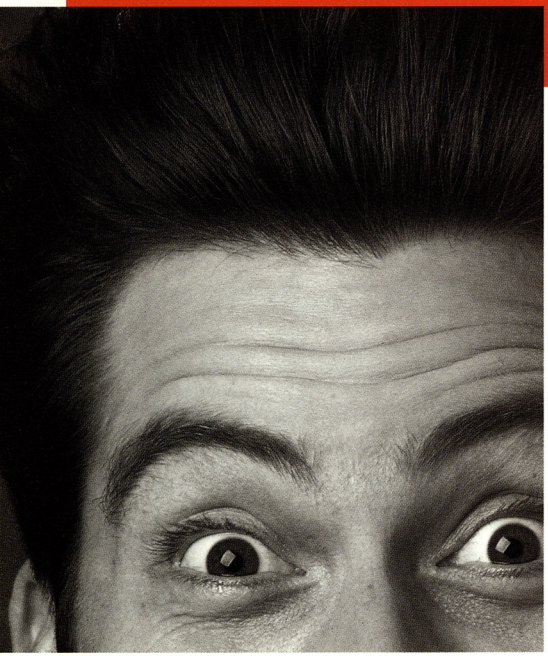
NG: The same sort of excuse people use to justify the purchase of a PC …
Trip: I think DVD is more important, though, because everybody already watches movies. It is inevitable DVD will do for movies what CDs did for music. Both are important. The reason they're important is that you can get the benefit without adding too much to the cost. You don't have to provide a modem card — it can be an add-on. And DVD drives don't cost that much more than a CD drive.

NG: Finally, how big do you see 3DO getting in the future?
Trip: I am not particularly concerned about achieving any particular size. What I do want to do is grow it organically and make sure we build it brick by brick and that we always do things that are the best.

NG: So where will you be in 2010?
Trip: 2010? I will be here making great games. I'm not too sure about the hardware, though! NG



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THE INTENSOR™ SURVIVAL GUIDE

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PART ONE

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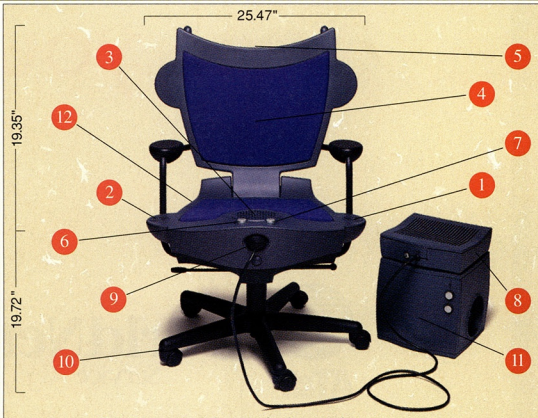


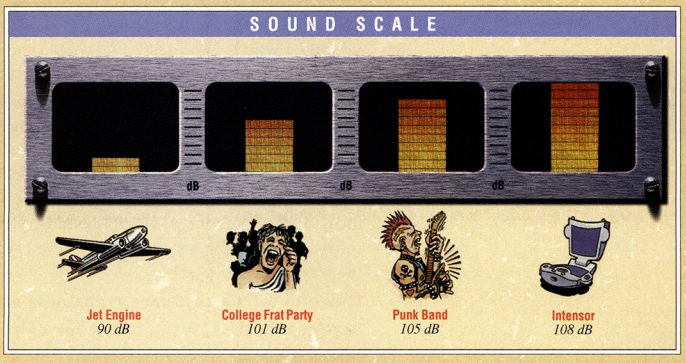
Fig. 1. *A breakdown of what you're up against.*

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2	Right 2" Mid-Range Directional
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PART TWO

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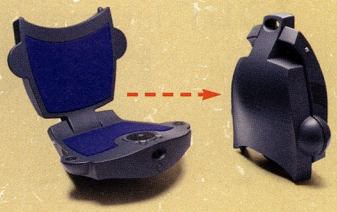


Fig. 2. *At 19 pounds, Intensor is designed for quick evacuation in the event things get ugly. (Shaky hands will appreciate the built-in molded carrying handle.)*

PART THREE

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DEFENSIVE PROCEDURES



Fig. 3a.
The Dodge



Fig. 3b.
The Weave

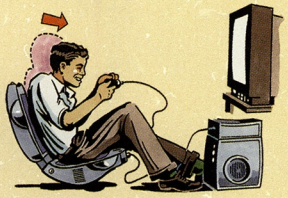


Fig. 3c.
The Duck

TACTILE SENSATION GRAPH

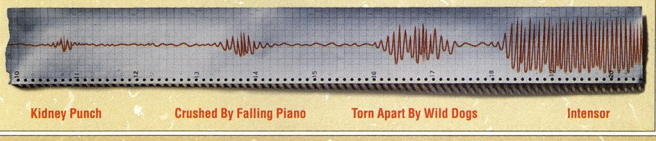




Fig. 4. *Artist's conception of Sensory Gaming's effect on the human heart. Those with heart conditions should proceed at their own risk.*



Fig. 5. *Note: Players attempting to negotiate Intensor on anything less than a good, stiff spine may be reduced to a vegetative state.*

PART FOUR

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Fig. 6. *Intensor has been known to induce shock. In such cases, place victim flat on back, elevate legs 8 to 12 inches and call for help. (If victim begins vomiting, place him or her on one side to allow fluid drainage.)*



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Assuming you've read this carefully, proceed to your favorite gaming retailer.

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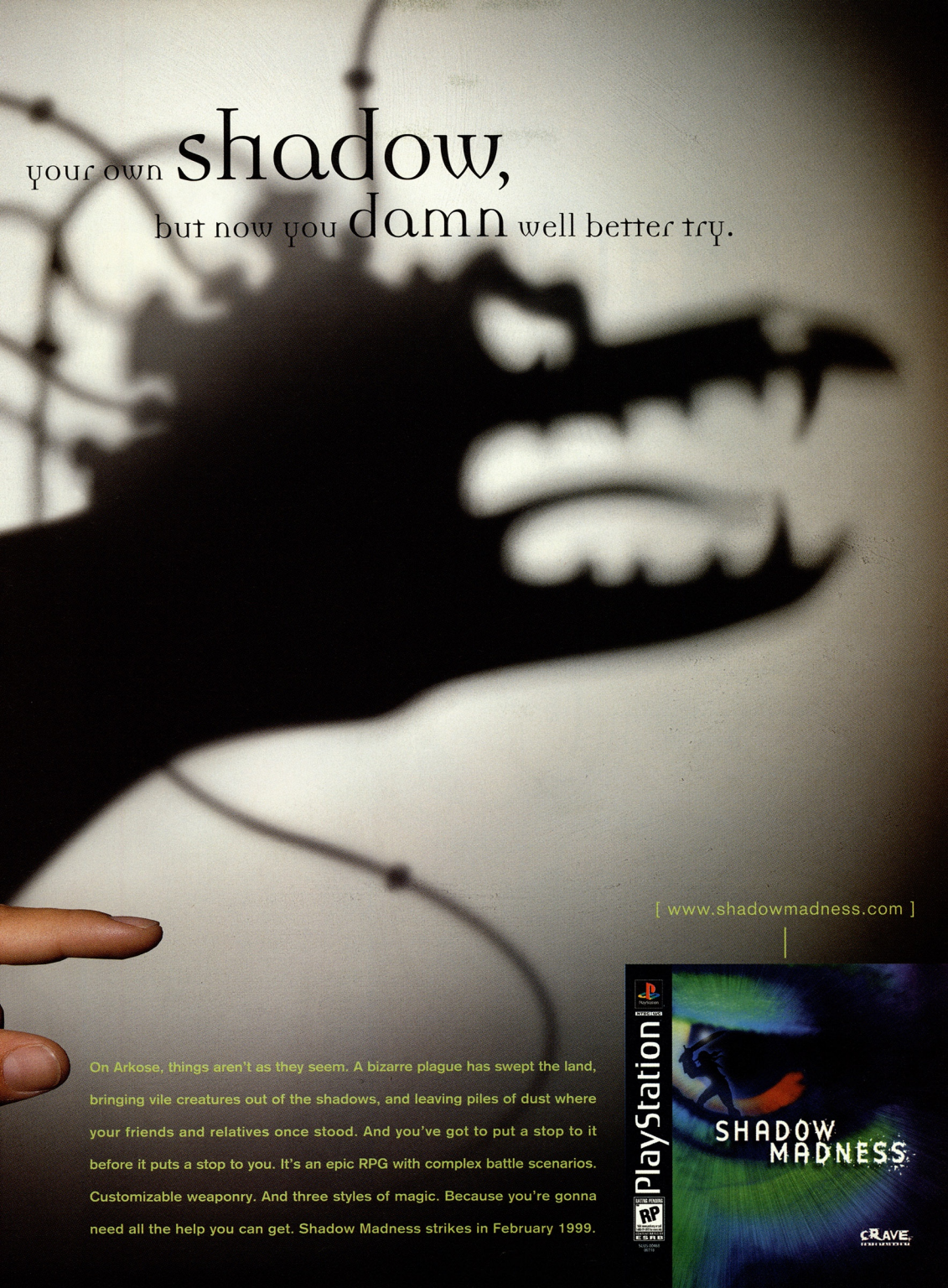
"Shadow Madness' story is easily comparable, if not superior, to the top titles of the genre..." — *GameFan Online*

CRAVE™ ENTERTAINMENT

PlayStation®

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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but now you damn well better try.
[www.shadowmadness.com]
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PlayStation
SHADOW MADNESS
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RP
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FINALS

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★★★★★
Revolutionary
Brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed; a new high watermark.

★★★★☆
Excellent
A high-quality and inventive new game. Either a step forward for an existing genre or a successful attempt at creating a new one.

★★★☆☆
Good
A solid and competitive example of an established game style.

★★☆☆☆
Average
Perhaps competent — certainly uninspired.

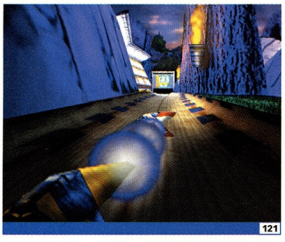
★☆☆☆☆
Bad
Crucially flawed in design or application.

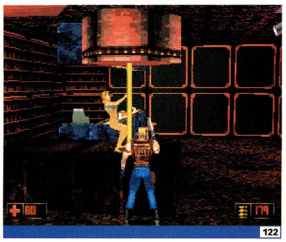
Denotes a review of a Japanese product.



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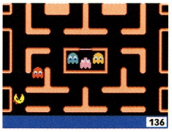

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The best Nintendo 64 title to date
is also **the best game ever designed**

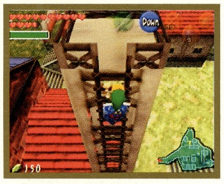
ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME

Publisher: **Nintendo**
Developer: **Nintendo**

In David Scheff's elaborate exposé of Nintendo, *Game Over*, Shigeru Miyamoto offers some insight into his inspiration for the *Zelda* series. Recalling his time spent playing as a boy, the world's most revered game designer reminisces about wandering alone for hours exploring the Kyoto countryside, drawn by the promise of stumbling upon dark caves, secluded lakes, or even tiny villages hidden amongst the mountains.



Camera angles are generally tighter and better than those in *Mario 64*, but the player still needs to manipulate viewpoints frequently — necessary items are well-placed but often just out of sight

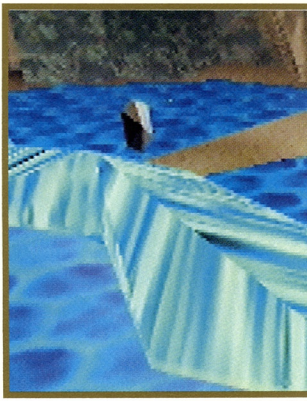




The feeling of *place* has never been captured so well on a console game. *Zelda 64* steps from pretty to immersive without skipping a beat

This guiding vision has been realized thoroughly in *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, the latest and greatest incarnation of the seminal action RPG series. It's possible that this is the *Zelda* Miyamoto wanted to make all along, with its open, less linear world intensifying the spirit of its gameplay beyond that of its forebears. Here is a game destined to capture the hearts of Nintendo 64 owners the world over — and simultaneously reaffirm its creator's stature as the Spielberg of videogames.

The most commendable aspect of the transformation of the series from 2D to 3D is that it retains the feel of its 8- and 16-bit precursors with measurable finesse. *Mario*'s celebrated graduation into 3D diluted some of the core principles of its platform-based gameplay but introduced an exploratory adventure-style depth that redefined its appeal. Recognizing the danger that *Zelda* could lose its distinctive feel by echoing *Mario 64*'s tried-and-tested-and-still-unsurpassed style, Miyamoto et al. put tremendous effort into making the game more than just a *Mario*-like romp with swords and pointy ears.



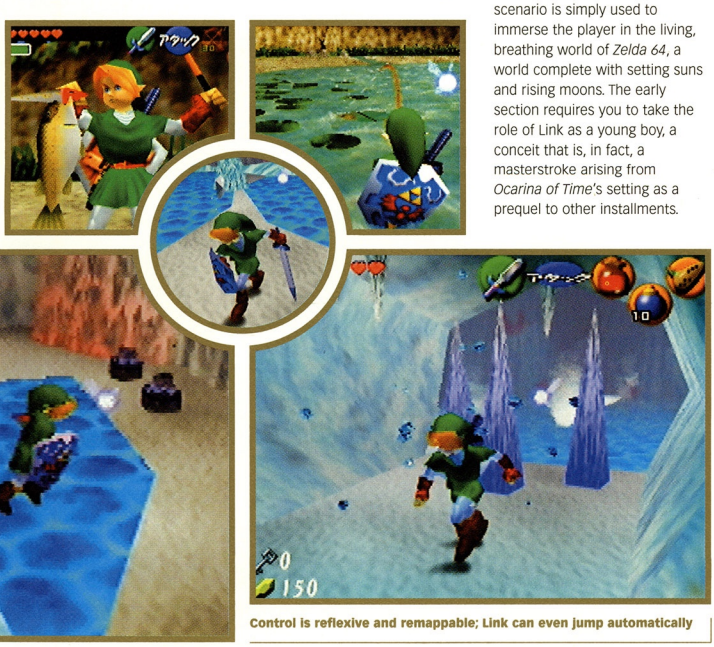
The game features a number of flat-out stunning realtime 3D sequences. Watching Link ride his newfound steed across undulating hills, silhouetted against the moonlight and then bathed in the blue glow of dawn, sets the tone for a game that draws as much on the emotional side of players as on the visceral; *Zelda*'s amazing suite of locations and characters are regularly depicted in beautiful cut scenes that evoke a truly cinematic perspective. Another inspired intro sequence is seen through the eyes of a faery as she flies in search of Link, giving the player time to become accustomed to the homely and engaging surroundings of Kahiri forest. On its best day Disney could not have done it better.

In the initial stage of the game, Link acquires certain items, and the player generally learns — through predictable interaction with other characters — to come to grips with the sheer depth of the control system, although fully adjusting to its nuances takes much longer. There is no doubt about the rich variety of gameplay, which ranges from trying to save an enormous, wise old tree to taming a horse or exploring the contents of a huge fish's stomach. Combat, while sophisticated and tricky, retains that gloriously inimitable feel from the 2D games, with Link locked onto close-range enemies in a third-person view that is more intuitive but no more effective than the game's all-new first-person mode.

One of Link's earliest tasks is to sneak into a castle under the noses of the guards on patrol. There is no violent slaying of the opposition, and failure isn't met with Link's untimely demise — the scenario is simply used to immerse the player in the living, breathing world of *Zelda 64*, a world complete with setting suns and rising moons. The early section requires you to take the role of Link as a young boy, a conceit that is, in fact, a masterstroke arising from *Ocarina of Time*'s setting as a prequel to other installments.



Some of the audio tracks will be familiar to Game Boy *Zelda* fans



Control is reflexive and remappable; Link can even jump automatically

WEAPONS

Weapons monopolize most buttons, with a third-person perspective possible in combat mode. This perspective takes some time to get used to but is seamlessly spliced into the regular behind-the-player camera view. And the first few bosses encourage players to adopt different tactics so that they learn how to master Link's full repertoire of moves and attacks.









New techniques have to be mastered — locking sights onto an enemy while moving is an essential skill











To say that *Ocarina of Time*'s graphics are exceptional is a massive understatement. Although much of the game is Gouraud-shaded like *Mario 64*, the use of color and effects is obviously much more advanced

There's a mischievous, spirited feel to controlling the younger Link too, aided by the mistrust and ridicule of some of the Hyrulian inhabitants. But this typically cutesy Nintendo style is later counterbalanced by the mature Link, who acknowledges his own responsibility and takes on the enormity of his quest. The mood of the game is constantly swinging between happy and sad — and good and evil — and it's a direction that pays off handsomely.

Visually, *Zelda* breaks new ground in its use of wide-open spaces and dramatically panoramic vistas, and in virtually every respect it succeeds in delivering the best visuals on the N64 so far. Realistic effects such as sandstorms, waterfalls, and general lighting all help to make this an extraordinarily beautiful game. Although the indoor, static (but 3D-scrolling) backdrops used in the town pale slightly in comparison with the rest of the game, the integrity of the graphics — the way they all interconnect so well to create a totally believable world — puts *Zelda* in a league of its own.

Link's interaction with the environments is also impressive; swimming in *Zelda* is a markedly different experience from swimming in *Mario*, and sound is an important factor. Incorporating musical notes that can be played on Link's ocarina (by using the yellow C buttons) is a stroke of genius and has an ethereal magic and a significance all its own. It is also possible to navigate by using music and sound effects, such as trickling water, that indicate the correct direction with changes in volume, augmented by the Rumble Pak's occasional giveaway clues. Incidentally, the quality of the music in the game ranges from the innocuously Muzak-like to the hauntingly beautiful, and sound effects (such as realistic wildlife sounds) represent some of best yet heard on the machine.

Far bigger in game size than any previous 2D outing, and visually, aurally, and emotionally unprecedented, *Zelda* boldly strides forward, taking gaming firmly into the realm of art. Despite its occasionally stilted text and rather well-worn, but faithful, end-is-nigh storyline, this iteration is classic *Zelda* fused with a whole new leap in imagination. Owning a Nintendo machine has never meant anything more than the having access to the best videogames in the world. And *Zelda* — certainly Nintendo's crowning achievement so far — deserves to be the world's favorite videogame.

RATING ★★★★★







As with past *Zelda* games, combat is essential and well-integrated, rarely gratuitous



The textures and models are about the most sophisticated seen yet on the system — no blurry eyesores here

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TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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Simply put, **this is the must-have PlayStation game** of the year

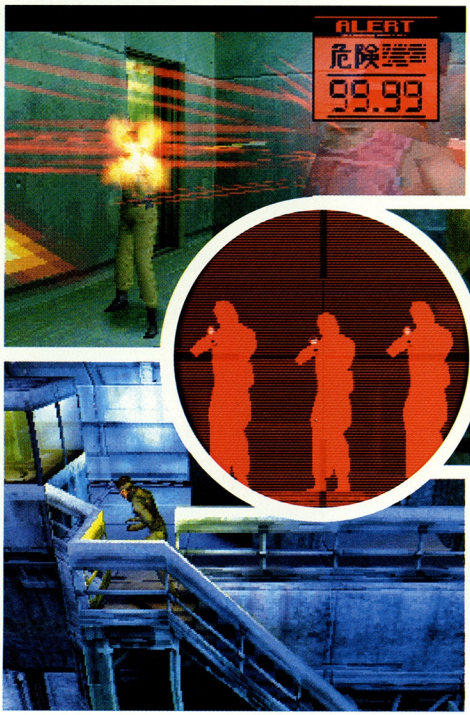
METAL GEAR SOLID

Publisher: **Konami**
Developer: **Konami**

Every once in a while a game comes along that forces you to redefine what videogames are all about. Sometimes it just looks better than everything else on the market, sometimes it just plays better, and sometimes it's just so different that it defies comparison to anything else. *Metal Gear Solid* does all of the above, living up to the hype and proving itself to be the pinnacle of PlayStation gaming.

You control Solid Snake, a soldier charged with breaking into an Alaskan military base, rescuing hostages, and defeating the terrorists that have taken over the base before they can launch a nuclear strike with the missiles stored there. You enter the base alone and unarmed and make the best of the situation. Because of the nature of your assault, it's best for you to stay hidden and use stealth instead of brute force as you make your way around the base. In fact, you are punished if discovered, and the alerted guards will hunt you down mercilessly as long as the alarm is sounding.

Even though you are trying to be sneaky, there are times when aggression is needed. Luckily, there are many different weapons and items to find on the base, which will help you blow stuff up, kill soldiers, or just cause general anarchy. Whatever your course of action may be, the control is tight and intuitive. After a little practice in the game's VR training mode, you will become adept at controlling Solid Snake and it will be second nature.





From time to time Snake will need to communicate with people back at the base via his codec









The ninja is somewhat of an enigma in the game. Why is he so intent on fighting Snake?



At one point in the game, Snake is captured by the enemy and subjected to torture. This scene is interactive as well, and your survival depends on your ability to push the button fast enough to keep Snake alive

As you explore the base, you will encounter many people, from hostages to the terrorists themselves. These encounters are portrayed in cinematic cut sequences that are played out using the game engine rather than FMV. What makes these scenes so exemplary is the fact that they are executed with competence and style. The stage direction would make John Woo proud, with a large number of slow-motion shots and odd camera angles. The voice acting is excellent as well — arguably the best in any game so far.

All of these scenes tie together a storyline of epic proportions. What starts off as a simple mission soon becomes an entanglement of lies, betrayals, and personal vendettas. Hollywood could learn a thing or two from this game. The only problem we found in *Metal Gear Solid* was that sometimes the dialogue tends to run a little long, but honestly, we'd be surprised if anybody except the most nitpicky gamer ever complains.

Graphically the game is second to none on the PlayStation. The base is fully realized and all done in realtime 3D. The whole game map is interconnected just like a real location, and you can go from one end to the other if you wish (and have the proper security clearance). The camera is probably one of the most intelligent we've seen, being both helpful and cinematic at the same time. Even the realtime cut scenes are spectacular and will blow the most jaded gamer away. The soundtrack is also phenomenal and truly enhances the game with subtle themes that play whenever appropriate. This is a soundtrack worth possessing on its own.

There are precious few games in this world that end up living up to the hype when they are released — especially when they've been hyped as much as this one. However, rest assured that this is a game no player should miss and the best reason yet to own a PlayStation.



Your first encounter with Meryl is an exciting, action-oriented shoot-out that leaves her teamed up with Snake to take them all out







Snake must scale down a wall while being shot at by a helicopter. Talk about intense ...

RATING ★★★★★


ALLISON
IS HAVING
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BAD HARE
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A PlayStation classic gets a **Nintendo 64 remix** — and a classic is still a classic

WIPEOUT 64

Publisher: **Psygnosis/ Midway**
Developer: **Psygnosis**

To compete with the embarrassing surfeit of racing games for the N64, new entries had better offer something unusual, and *Wipeout 64* does. It's technically accomplished, has an established pedigree, and offers N64 owners a unique slant on an existing game. And above all else, it's *Wipeout* — the very king of futuristic racing games.





N64 lighting effects add depth and unusual clarity to the gameplay









Draw-in is consistent if not great, but the track design takes care of major problems — it's certainly better than that in *Extreme G*

Now being co-published by Midway and Psygnosis, the game has a somewhat confusing heritage. Psygnosis developed it, Midway will manufacture it (via Nintendo) and distribute it, and Psygnosis will pick up a share of the profits. Psygnosis was supposed to handle the whole deal but balked at cartridge production costs.

On a technical level, this is the prettiest incarnation of the *Wipeout* series to date. The PC versions were smoother and crisper, but they failed to take advantage of the accelerated hardware's lighting dynamics. The N64 version is a pyrotechnical treat, with lots of special lighting effects in the weapons and tracks, plus a high frame rate with well-planned and unobtrusive pop-in (horizons are close thanks to steep track layouts).

The vehicles are very similar to those seen in *Wipeout XL*, with a couple of newer ships and all of the old favorites. Weapons, including the rather dramatic quake, are replicated well and are actually much easier to see, thanks to the N64's higher resolution. Clarity adds a level of playability to the game, something that's especially important in multiplayer modes.

The multiplayer game is the most important aspect of *Wipeout 64*, and it has been treated with great respect. N64 has the obvious advantage of four existing joypad ports, and the game uses them well. Two-player mode is the most satisfying, but only with a decent-sized TV, the four-player experience is almost as rewarding.

Amazingly enough, the N64 version has more sampled speech than the PlayStation one has. It's unobtrusive, almost useful, and adds to the atmosphere. N64 can't hope to compete with the PlayStation CD soundtrack, but a brave attempt at some fast techno themes using the N64's DSP does the trick. Since the machine can only really play samples anyway, the music sounds techno enough.

Any real drawbacks are in the one-player mode. Depending on the track you play, it varies from enormously difficult to very easy. There's no real feeling of gradual progression. You simply have to get very good, very fast. Computer AI seems well-balanced, and your robot opponents behave much as you would hope — with less of the "cheating" associated with other AIs in the racing field.

The competition in this market cannot be ignored. *F-Zero* is faster, *San Francisco Rush* is more varied, and *Wave Race* is more unusual. That said, *Wipeout* provides a much sought-after experience and does it brilliantly. The game has improved drastically from the first time it was shown at E3 and will no doubt thrill N64 owners.

RATING ★★★★☆

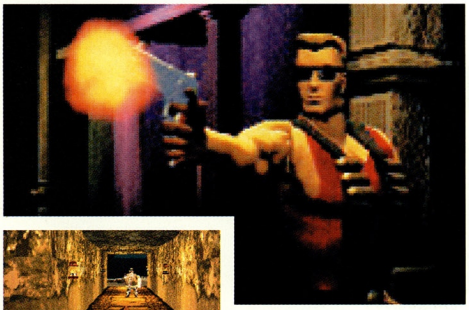
One of gaming's most **recognizable figures** gets a **new perspective — and nails it**

DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL

Publisher: **GT Interactive**
Developer: **N-Space**

For all of Duke Nukem's anti-politically correct machismo and lovable sexism, you'd think that the mega multiplatform commando franchise man would just stay right where he's most comfortable — in the realm of the first-person shooter. Well, on PlayStation, that's not the case.

Duke Nukem, meet Lara Croft.









Duke continues to be fashionable, no matter what era he lands in, and this game puts him in the oddest places

Yep. *Duke Nukem: Time to Kill* is a full-grown (fully evolved?) third-person shooter, put together in the same mold from which *Tomb Raider*'s Lara Croft sprang forth. Obviously, Duke's no slender, busty babe, but the basic mechanics are the same. Unlike previous *Duke* titles, no longer are you scrambling quickly like a mad animal to kill or be killed. Gone are the chaotic chases made up of instant reflexes and hair-trigger impulses. Now, the character's entire muscle-bound form is in sight, and you can perform new, different tasks in addition to those you already knew.

And yet, this won't be a problem to anyone except the most fanatical of mindless first-person devotees, and making allowances for the shift in genre, this killer is still made from the stuff of *Duke*. Although Duke himself moves more slowly and the pace of the game is decelerated, the prime goals are still shooting lots of pigs, aliens, and floating brains into a bloody pulp, as well as blowing up just about everything in sight. And you're still armed with pipe bombs, shotguns, and hand guns, but better, extra-heavy artillery, such as flamethrowers, is now available for good, righteous use.

The apocalyptic environments spilling over with strip joints and dark alleys are joined — via time travel — with landscapes from imperial Rome, medieval Europe, and America's Wild West, to name a few. Frankly, it's kind of weird to see Duke in a white toga with high-strapped sandals, but hey, Charlton Heston never looked that good in bed sheets either, and he got away with it.

It's only the two-person deathmatch that leaves something to be desired. This is where the game really suffers, especially considering it was one of *Duke*'s biggest strengths as a first-person game. The stiff third-person perspective, along with PlayStation's technical restrictions, has all but stripped the brilliant strategy and instant fun found in the multiplayer PC version.

However, in the end, *Duke Nukem: Time to Kill* is in many ways a bold move for GT Interactive, 3D Realms, and N-Space. This title shows that the *Duke Nukem* series is capable of change and can do it successfully. But whether *Duke Nukem* fans across the world will really ever accept this type of game has yet to be seen. In our opinion, though, they should.





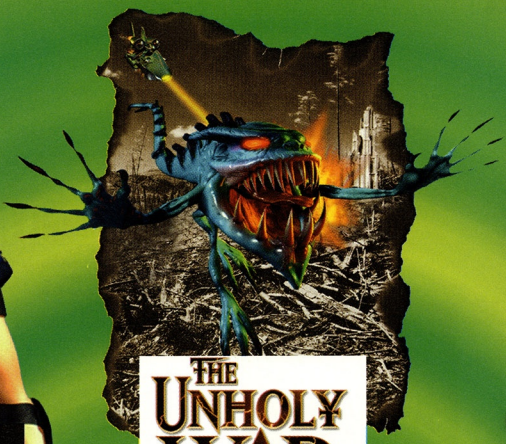
The gun was jammed so he had to pummel the bullets in one-by-one by hand. Hey, as long as they end up dead ...

RATING ★★★★☆



The third-person perspective takes a little getting used to, but it works







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PlayStation

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EIDOS INTERACTIVE

BODY HARVEST

Platform: **Nintendo 64**
Publisher: **Midway**
Developer: **DMA Design**

DMA's *Body Harvest* was first announced before the N64 was even launched, so you have to figure that this is one of the most delayed N64 games ever. But maybe a little time did the game some good because *Body Harvest* is certainly worth the wait.

The game is set in the near future, with aliens invading Earth to consume our resources and our bodies — nasty. Only a few scientists are still alive, but they have a plan: Send a time-traveling supersoldier back to the turn of the millennium to destroy the aliens.

The game shapes up into a violent strategic shooter with a few RPG elements. The aliens attack in many waves and take many forms, from lowly green blobs of protoplasm to giant cyberorganic spiders. These attacks dictate the pace and rhythm of the game, and it feels slightly repetitious. But to ease this feeling, you have at your disposal the biggest selection of vehicles since Sony's *Gran Turismo*, from tanks to WWII planes. Each vehicle has a different strength, and you will have to use almost all of them sooner or later — this is a massive game.



Although the game's graphics look a little behind the times, *Body Harvest*'s gameplay is on the money

Originally, Nintendo was supposed to release *Body Harvest*, and it seems odd that the company let this complex and enjoyable blaster go. Add in the game's interesting environments, truly creepy soundtrack, and amazing variety, and it starts to look as if maybe Nintendo bumped its head on something. Although not as clever or polished as DMA's own *Space Station: Silicon Valley*, *Body Harvest* is an unsettling and thoroughly enjoyable game with lots of original and fun features.

RATING ★★★★☆

BUCK BUMBLE

Platform: **Nintendo 64**
Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
Developer: **Argonaut**

Buck Bumble is the kind of game that many players dismiss outright because of its cute looks and unassuming appearance. However, that would be a mistake. *Buck Bumble* follows the story of a bee that has been enhanced by the military. It seems the evil Herd queen is fixing to take over the world and Buck must stop her. The story isn't the most original, but the game certainly is.

What stands out about *Buck Bumble* is the fact that the player has full freedom of flight within the world. Granted, there are boundaries, but within those the player is free to roam about. Some areas can be rather large, and fog quickly appears everywhere, but fortunately, Argonaut has done a good job of sectioning off areas to limit the extent of the fog. The music and sound effects are mostly average, with only the *Buck Bumble* "theme" — a speed garage mix — standing out.

Buck himself is fairly easy to control, but there are a few limitations on flight that seem out of place. For example, Buck can only fly forward or hover. He can only go higher by moving forward, and even though he can perform a loop (which proves that the little bugger can fly inverted), Buck can't execute a traditional barrel roll maneuver. The flight engine works as is, but a bit more freedom would have been better.

Overall, *Buck Bumble* is most like a diamond in the rough. There are a few edges that need to be polished, but as a whole, it still shines.

RATING ★★★☆☆



***Buck Bumble* is cute and plays reasonably well, but a few quirks keep it from greatness**

CRUISIN' WORLD

Platform: **Nintendo 64**
Publisher: **Midway**
Developer: **Midway**

After the dismal failure that was *Cruisin' USA*, you can imagine our apprehension at the prospect of reviewing a sequel. This new version still is not good, but it is much better than its predecessor — not that that's saying much.

Cruisin' World is as straightforward a racing game as they come. There are several vehicles to choose from as well as a dozen or so tracks from around the world. The speed is fast this time around, and the game control is fairly tight. Even the graphics, while still the same 2D sprites in a 3D environment, are much cleaner and don't really detract from the game. There is even a four-player mode that works fairly well and only slows the game down a little.

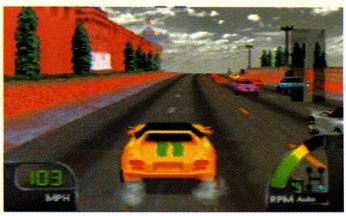
The real problem is that the game demands only minimal technique and gets old quickly. Even the inclusion of a few stunts you can pull off on jumps really does little to expand the life of the game. It all starts to feel exactly the same after a while and quickly becomes boring. Strangely enough, even the four-player mode does very little to liven up the drab gameplay.

Overall, we're glad that Midway has solved the technical problems that plagued the first installment in this series. Now it needs to work on the gameplay for the next game because, as it is now, this series is far too uninspired to stand out in even the N64's meager library of racing games.

RATING ★★☆☆☆







Stunts help to liven up *Cruisin' World*'s gameplay a little bit, but they still don't make it much good



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GLOVER

Platform: Nintendo 64
Publisher: Hasbro Interactive
Developer: Interactive Studios

One of the more intriguing platformers on N64, *Glover* hooks players with its innovative control scheme. The main character, a white glove, is responsible for maneuvering a morphing ball around a host of strange worlds while on a mission to rescue its wizard master. Maneuvering safely around different levels requires you to bounce, throw, roll, and ride the ball in a whole manner of ways. But the glove can also function separately from the ball, handling much like any other platform character, with jumps, grapples, and running speed comparable to Banjo's. It's an interesting and complex control scheme that forces you to be more resourceful and clever in solving puzzles and overcoming obstacles.

Unfortunately, it's the game's controls that also make *Glover* more than a handful. Moving the ball around the terrain, though a challenge in itself, is made increasingly difficult by the fact that the ball has its own weird physics. Trying to maneuver the ball onto higher platforms, on water, or around tight curves is a chore that takes more than determination. In fact, it usually requires luck — not a good formula. The camera is also a problem because it doesn't always adequately track your progress, often getting stuck behind walls or obstacles. That raises the frustration factor when you are trying to move the ball quickly to safe ground.

But with interesting level designs, a challenging structure for item collection, and bright, competent visuals, *Glover* does manage to provide a refreshing angle on typical platformers. With some patience and practice, those looking for a unique challenge and willing to deal with a few control and camera flaws will find this worth a look.

RATING ★★★☆☆



With a unique control scheme, *Glover* manages to overcome technological flaws and give N64 platform fans a new twist on an old genre

WCW/NWO REVENGE

Platform: Nintendo 64
Publisher: THQ
Developer: Asmik







***WCW/NWO Revenge* is about as close to professional wrestling "as seen on TV." Get some friends together and you can easily duplicate the balletlike experience that is pro wrestling**

Wrestling is more than just a sport of men grappling, slamming, and pinning; it's also about mood, atmosphere, and, well, lots of narcissistic posing. *WCW/NWO Revenge* delivers the real live spectacle "just like on TV" — and delivers it well.

The full exhibitionist phenomenon of professional wrestling is served up by *Revenge* better than by any other game we've seen. Long intros with individual music sequences and lots of posing really set the mood for each bout. All are motion captured and realistic. They add nothing to gameplay (and may, in fact, annoy anyone who just wants to get into the action), but they are a familiar part of the experience for a wrestling fan.

Revenge may not offer much that hasn't been seen before, but it never goes astray, and there's a lot to choose from. Three wrestling modes (Championship, Exhibition, and Special Match) are packed with even more choices, including different weights, single or tag matches, and Battle Royal. Seven trademarked locales and shows are available (including Monday Nitro, Halloween, and Starcade), and players can also choose from at least three costumes per wrestler.

The game plays well. It's relatively fast; each wrestler has a respectable number of moves; and despite the by-hand animation (as opposed to motion captured) with cartoonish textures (as opposed to realistic skin textures), the players move and look like the real thing.

Possibly the best part of the game is the music. N64 carts are notorious for bad music, but *Revenge*'s hard-rock sounds, loaded with long guitar solos, set the mood. All in all, the whole package is extremely well done.

RATING ★★★★☆

ARMORED CORE: PROJECT PHANTASMA

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: Ascii Entertainment
Developer: From Software

A fast-paced, strategy shooter mech game for PlayStation is a rare find. There hasn't been anything like *Armored Core: Project Phantasma* since, well, um, the original *Armored Core*. And therein lies the problem. *Phantasma* isn't really much of an advancement over the original game — not in gameplay and certainly not in graphics.

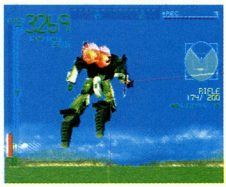
That said, *Phantasma* is still pretty fun, providing *Armored Core* devotees with many more of the features that made the original exciting and unique. Players can customize their mechs with more parts and weapons, and there are updated and enhanced missions. Another new feature that adds immensely to the replayability is the deathmatch mode, in which players can challenge other ACs to, basically, a shoot-out. If they win, they move up the ranks.

Along with regular gameplay, *Project Phantasma* offers a Versus mode in which two players can duke it out in a number of environments. Now, we're not saying that the developers ripped off the Versus mode from *Virtual On*; let's just say they were highly influenced.

What's rather disappointing about the game is the dated graphics. Other PlayStation games have progressed, graphics-wise, where *Armored Core 2* seems to have stagnated. Plus, the game requires a lot of trial and error and resource management, so if you're looking for action, or just aren't the patient sort, you're not likely to enjoy the game. But those who were really into the original *Armored Core* — and there were more than a few — should enjoy the greater number of missions and options in *Project Phantasma*.

RATING ★★★☆☆





In arena gameplay, players can challenge other ACs to try and move up among the ranks. The ability to fly is quite handy too

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BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **THQ**
Developer: **Adrenaline**



***Brunswick* is full of solid options and modes. Players will get a real feel for the ball with this excellent, two-pronged control system**

Forget baseball. Bowling is, in a weirdly tangible way, America's sport. And like any good American sport, there ought to be a damn good videogame of it. Wait no longer, because *Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling* is that game.

What *Brunswick* does better than any other game is get the physics right: The ball spins, slides, curves, and hits the pins just like a real bowling ball. What's more, the pins move dead-on, too. When hit by a powerfully thrown ball, the pins are capable of bouncing off the walls and knocking the last few standing pins down, just as in real life. Controlling the bowlers isn't difficult either, since two gauges (spin, power) measure the ball's flight.

Adrenaline has gone the full length in many areas to provide the most bang for the buck. Players can choose a worldwide circuit with logos and environments that reflect each location (Europe, U.S., Japan, and so on), enter various tournaments, go for the Disco Bowl (a new trend in bowling), or create a bowler. Thanks to the Brunswick license, fanatics can select the real pros, many of whom are listed in the game — and who all play like their real-life counterparts.

Brunswick's only downfall is that it's kind of a slow-paced game with forgettable music and generic-looking graphics. Still, it's good in all the right areas of gameplay, and it plays well. Bowlers unite.

RATING ★★★★☆

DRAGONSEEDS

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **Jaleco**
Developer: **Jaleco**







***Dragonseeds* provides the basic experience of a monster breeding/fighting game, but not much else**

Like Tecmo's *Monster Rancher*, *Dragonseeds* is a game that lets you breed mystic and magical creatures, train them, and then compete against other monsters in various tournaments. In this case, you're a dragonsage, raising bioengineered dragons.

The heart of the game is in the combat. Players can either compete in officially sanctioned tournaments or participate in glorified cockfights at Pablo's bar. The actual fights take place between finely detailed combatants, and as you move up the ladder and your dragons evolve, the opponents become more bizarre and dangerous (the Living Doors are especially nasty).

Unfortunately, the heart of any breeding/combat simulation is very basic, and it's only the window dressing that separates a *Monster Rancher* from *Lemonade Stand*. *Dragonseeds* is little more than a minimalist polygon engine grafted on top of a series of static screens. The main interface window is merely an overhead map with 10 locations, with only half of those serving any real purpose. Further, training is mechanical to an extreme degree. Dragons display no fatigue, no anger, no affection — and without that sort of feedback, players have no reason to love their creations, which is the main draw behind *Monster Rancher*, *Pocket Monster*, and the esoteric *Princess Maker* series. Without that, only an analytical compulsion to see what happens next remains, and there isn't enough next to support even that.

RATING ★★☆☆☆

MEDIEVIL

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **SCEA**
Developer: **SCEA**



While not the most unique or inspired game on PlayStation, *MediEvil* does offer some solid gameplay and a good dose of dark humor

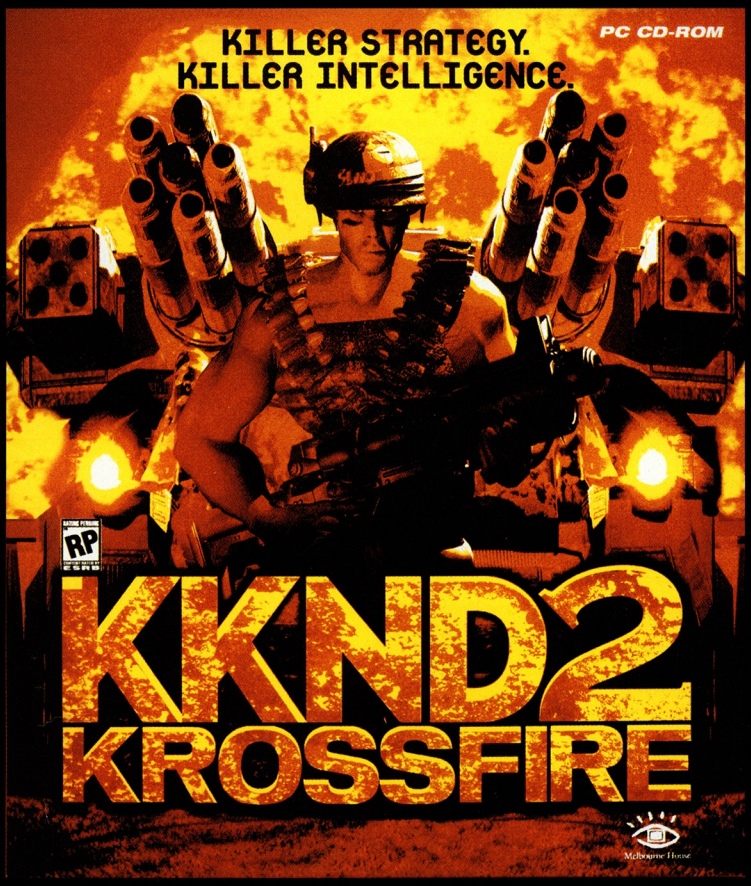
On the heels of the visually stunning *Spyro the Dragon*, Sony shifts gears for a more darkly humorous 3D platformer. As the revised spirit of Sir Dan Fortesque, you face having to save the kingdom from an old enemy. In addition to hacking and slashing through multiple levels of gothic-style graveyards, possessed towns, and haunted castles, you must also solve puzzles and complete objectives in every stage.

There are some problems with the free-roaming camera, which doesn't keep up with Sir Dan as smoothly as it should. Aside from that, minor snags such as loose controls and slight confusion about the direction you are facing are annoying but don't usually get in the immediate way of gameplay. While not as shiny or polished as *Spyro*, *MediEvil* does hold its weight in the production department by looking good and playing fairly well. The different attacks and weapons serve to vary each fight slightly, and bosses require the use of skills as well as dexterity.

In fact, the only problem is that the whole game, while neatly packaged, is aimed strictly at platform fans. There's nothing new here, in either design or gameplay, and in the end, *MediEvil* just doesn't have enough to push it beyond being anything more than a competent clone of what's come before.

RATING ★★★☆☆

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MOTO RACER 2

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Developer: **Delphine**

Get ready for a serious ride because the surprisingly slick motorcycle racer that jolted gamers little more than a year ago is back. In fact, *Moto Racer 2* uses an upgraded version of the original engine, which simply means it's more of the same good racing as before.

But Delphine didn't just sit on its proverbial ass. Among other changes, the engine was tweaked to crank out a faster frame rate while adding better textures and more highly detailed backgrounds and bikes. You can still bolt carelessly across highways, and for the most part, the game's handling is as good as it was before. But now players can choose whether they want to race arcade style (a more forgiving race) or vie in simulation mode, making it a moderately deeper game.

Moto Racer 2 is one- or two-player again, just like the original, and in either mode the new environments are creatively designed and look terrific. You'll hit more bumps, cross more rickety bridges, and find cities with not only greater detail, but also more creatively designed streets and alleys.

However, the best aspect of *Moto Racer 2* is the Build a Course feature. The intuitive and simple tools enable players to build many quickly. And about 50 can be saved to just one memory card. Sweet. There is enough here to make it all worthwhile — just don't expect an entirely new game.

RATING ★★★★☆



***Moto Racer 2* enables players to build tracks and trade them with friends (or enemies) for a bigger challenge**

NCAA FOOTBALL 99

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Developer: **Tiburon Entertainment**





Don't let the polygons fool you — with few exceptions, *NCAA Football 99* plays almost exactly like *NCAA 98*

EA's *NCAA Football* has made the move to polygons this year, and that's about the best thing to happen to the series. Visually the game is a lot sharper than last year, with larger characters and more realistic animations. And in fact, the improved visuals make all the difference when you're attempting to execute a running play. The only caveat about the use of polygons is that it can cause slowdown at times. That can be annoying, but it doesn't have a major effect on gameplay.

In addition to the visuals, there are a number of minor additions and upgrades to the game, the most useful of which is analog passing. Using the dual analog joysticks, you can add a new level of precision to your passing game. The left stick controls the QB while the right stick controls a "target," which can be positioned anywhere on field. Once it's set, you click down on the joystick to determine the strength of the pass. A release sends the ball on its way. Although it is difficult to learn, analog passing is a nice innovation.

Other features in *NCAA 99* include an expanded Dynasty mode with the ability to play as coach, and coaches who do well are offered jobs at bigger-name schools. There's also a play editor, which gives budding coaches the ability to come up with game-winning plays.

Among all the features that have been added to *NCAA 99*, one thing has been left alone — the gameplay. *NCAA 99* is just as solid as ever, and if anything, plays even better than last year's version. Although it doesn't break any new ground, *NCAA 99* has enough new features and improvements to make it a worthwhile purchase.

RATING ★★★☆☆

RIVAL SCHOOLS: UNITED BY FATE

Platform: **PlayStation**
Publisher: **Capcom**
Developer: **Capcom**

Originally running on the PlayStation-friendly System 11 arcade board, *Rival Schools* now hits home nicely with extra modes, four new characters, and two discs of pure enjoyment. The first disc contains a straight conversion of the arcade game, whereas the second disc features a more balanced version of the game, along with a host of additional features and options that home players will enjoy.

Rival Schools can be best compared to *Street Fighter EX + Alpha*, but there are a couple of major differences between the two titles. First and foremost, Capcom seems to have designed this game with the general player in mind. Instead of the standard six attack buttons, there are only four to worry about — two punches and two kicks. Because of that, special moves and combos are really easy to pull off.

The other major difference, and what makes this game especially neat, is the added tag-team feature derived from *X-Men vs. Street Fighter*. You can't switch characters on the fly, but you can switch characters after each round. You can also call your allies out to help you perform a special all-powerful attack, such as the twin Hadoken fireballs.

Unfortunately, although this is one of the most accurate arcade translations ever, *Rival Schools* still doesn't win any awards in the visuals department. The characters look a bit blocky and aren't as detailed as they could be. But that aside, this is one of the more enjoyable fighting games available, and hardcore players should give *Rival Schools* a try. They may be pleasantly surprised.

RATING ★★★☆☆





Arcade-perfect gameplay and easy controls make *Rival Schools* one of the more enjoyable fighting games on PlayStation



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ROGUE TRIP

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: SingleTrac

Many gamers will remember that SingleTrac was the company responsible for *Twisted Metal 1* and *2*, two titles that revolutionized the car-combat genre. Since then, the company has moved on to become part of GT Interactive, but the rights to the *Twisted Metal* series still belong to Sony. That's why *Rogue Trip* is more of a spiritual successor than an actual sequel.

Players can choose from 11 initial cars, each of which features a different special attack along with varying handling characteristics. And just as in the *Twisted Metal* series, players can find and pick up power-ups to increase a car's abilities. The environments, which range from Las Vegas to Area 51, are extremely interactive and contain tons of hidden areas. There is certainly a lot of variety here, but we wish that SingleTrac could have improved the game's graphics a bit. They simply don't compare to those of Activision's *Vigilante 8*.

Still, the game plays a lot like *Twisted Metal 2*, but the cars handle much better, and the physics engine has been refined. The only other major difference involves the addition of tourists. While racing through the 12 different levels, you can pick up tourists, take them to photo-op locations, and get paid. You can then take the money and purchase more powerful weapons or restore some of your health.

In the end, however, *Rogue Trip* just doesn't rise up to the competition. Those who are looking for the ultimate car-combat title should stick with *Vigilante 8*. It offers pretty much everything that *Rogue Trip* does, but better.

RATING ★★★☆☆



***Rogue Trip*, SingleTrac's attempt at a new car-combat franchise, doesn't quite make the grade**

S.C.A.R.S.

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Vivid Image

S.C.A.R.S. looked quite promising when it was shown at E3 in its N64 version, but the PlayStation version doesn't quite cut it somehow, which is a shame. To begin with, although set in the year 3000, the game's environments are as "futuristic" as Aztec temples, desert canyons, and ski slopes.

The use of weapons is similar to that in *Wipeout* and especially the *Motor Toon* series, both of which did it better. On the other hand, the four-player split screen is a great option for Multitap owners, and something that isn't found much on PlayStation. The level of fun increases with the number of players, and although graphically things could have been designed better, it's all smooth and fast — even in multiplayer mode. That said, the game simply lacks character and fails to really hook the player. The cars feel as if they're sliding rather than rolling on wheels, and the atmosphere is a touch baffling.

For all its faults, *S.C.A.R.S.* isn't terrible, and it is one of the few PlayStation games to allow four players to race in 3D on a split screen. If you have a Multitap, this is almost a worthy purchase. Without a Multitap, it's a colorful racer, but not much else.

RATING ★★☆☆☆





The *S.C.A.R.S.* backstory doesn't make a lot of sense, but then, neither does the gameplay

TALES OF DESTINY

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco

A quasi sequel to the successful Super Famicom title *Tales of Phantasia*, Namco's first 32-bit role-playing endeavor on the PlayStation will appeal mostly to fans of RPGs.

Tales of Destiny, though not exactly the most impressive-looking or -sounding RPG on PlayStation, packs in a massive amount of appeal, charm, and depth for gamers familiar with the history of 16-bit role-playing; i.e., don't expect wildly high-tech visuals or an incredibly complex story digging into the depths of the human soul. However, *Tales of Destiny* is a simple yet enjoyable romp through what RPGs once were — long adventures featuring lots of character interaction and battles. And with this perspective, expect the game to be entertaining and even challenging at times.

Equipped with Swordians, a set of intelligent weapons, Stahn and his friends must find a way to save Earth from destruction at the hands of a Utopian-crazed group of elitists. Subtle features like interactivity, subevents, and countless minigames provide a high level of depth and immersion while the player chases down the otherwise linear goals of the main plot.

The clever battle system, with manual controls and special attacks, keeps gameplay interactive and interesting as well. When your character enters a battle, the perspective switches to a side-scrolling view. Here, you can duke it out as you would in a fighting game against multiple enemies. As the game progresses, you'll acquire different skills and techniques to use in combat.

It's this unique combat system and the large number of secrets that really keep the player immersed in the world. And although *Tales of Destiny* may not have what it takes to hook newer fans recently weaned on the graphics and gameplay of *Final Fantasy VII*, the game does stand on its own as an involving adventure with plenty of subtle charm.

RATING ★★★☆☆







Although the graphics don't match those of some recent PlayStation RPGs (*Parasite Eve*, *Final Fantasy VII*), *Tales of Destiny*'s depth presents a solid foundation for players familiar with older titles in the genre







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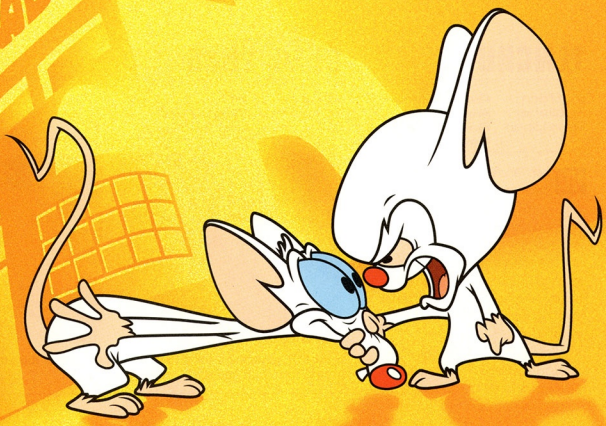
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TENCHU

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Sony Music Entertainment

When *Tenchu* was released in Japan, it was a ninja game like no other — the first action title on PlayStation that relied on a gameplay aesthetic totally different from the "kill or be killed" attitude in most other games. It also emphasized stealth and strategic thinking over firepower and provided a glimpse of *Metal Gear Solid*'s revolutionary gameplay.

But the game was also full of glitches: Poor camera control, polygon glitching, and control problems marred an otherwise excellent game, which made Activision's claim that it would not only fix *Tenchu*, but also improve it, a very exciting one. The reality is only slightly less impressive.

Activision has made significant changes in the conversion, but it feels as if the developers have jury-rigged bug fixes and added filler material rather than improved the game. To remove the awkward camera angles, the American version forces the character to remain onscreen, at the expense of the game's original flexibility. Where the camera used to automatically rotate and zoom around a corner to spot approaching enemies, players now have to turn characters in the appropriate direction, or the camera will freeze in position, blocking the view of the sentry that's walking around the corner. Likewise, giving enemies the ability to detect players on different elevations is all well and good, but Activision has made them so sensitive that it's almost impossible to approach them stealthily without machinelike precision.

Still, the gameplay is mostly intact and is superior to Eidos' ninja game. And while *Tenchu* isn't as high-quality as *Metal Gear Solid*, it does have some better features. With more levels and more weapons than the Japanese version, *Tenchu* is definitely worth a look.

RATING ★★★★☆



The U.S. version of *Tenchu* is better than the Japanese version, but still not as good as it could have been

DUNE 2000

Platform: PC
Publisher: Westwood
Developer: Westwood





At first glance it's hard to tell whether you're looking at *Dune 2000* or just a custom Red Alert map

It's funny that *Dune 2000* actually does all that it promises to do and still manages to fail as a great game. Honestly, all Westwood promised with *Dune 2000* was a graphical upgrade on its original realtime strategy classic *Dune 2* along with some multiplayer options. Since *Dune 2* was one of the first in this new era of RTS titles, gamers looked forward to playing this updated version.

The bad news is that *Dune 2000* really is only a graphical update of *Dune 2* with multiplayer options, and it shows its age in the gameplay. Features we've come to know and expect, such as the ability to queue up more than one unit, advanced unit AI, and races with unique weapons, are missing. Although there are three races to choose from, each with its own videos (in single-player) and backstory, they play remarkably similarly. In fact, in a two-player game the early rush tactic is so badly balanced that it's often a surprise if either player gets to the advanced units. Many games actually end within the first minutes because it's so easy to rush and be rushed. When you have more players, it's not so bad because the players balance out a little better, and admittedly the single-player is much more fun. Really, though, who plays RTS games on single-player mode anymore? Most people don't, and Westwood even seems to acknowledge this with its free online matchmaker, Westwood Chat, which includes built-in tournament ladders.

Graphically, the game falls just shy of *Red Alert* and far below the high marks set by *Total Annihilation*, *Age of Empires*, or even Westwood's upcoming *Command & Conquer 2*. The audio is well-done, though, with stirring themes that merge subtly with the sounds of an epic battle in the background. Indeed, sometimes the music is more stirring than the actual gameplay.

We applaud the fact that Westwood did exactly what it said it would do with this game, but we have to question the person who approved the idea in the first place. Oh, well — maybe the company will do a true sequel next time instead of yet another tired realtime rehash.

And it gets an automatic one-star deduction for featuring John "Multimedia Whore" Rhys-Davies in the FMV.

RATING ★★☆☆☆

EMERGENCY — FIGHTERS FOR LIFE

Platform: PC
Publisher: WizardWorks
Developer: Sixteen Tons Entertainment

Most strategy games focus on battles or other conflicts, so it was a surprise when WizardWorks released *Emergency*, a strategy game based on real-life heroes like firefighters and rescue squads. It seems like a unique, interesting idea — too bad it's a terrible game.

The biggest problem with *Emergency* is the pace — it's terribly slow, and you must perform a lot of redundant actions for no apparent reason. For example, one vehicle must be loaded with personnel and sent on its way before another vehicle can be prepared. Another problem is that the control scheme is set up with Move as the default action. That means that a unit must be selected, moved, and then deselected before another can be chosen. Although it may not sound like much, this simple control issue is sure to cause much frustration.

Aside from these hurdles, the missions are playable but not always logical. The second mission in the game, extinguishing an apartment fire, opens with the scene surrounded by gawkers, yet police are unable to move them out of the way. After the fire is put out, the injured residents must be rescued, but surprisingly enough, paramedics aren't allowed inside the building. Instead, firemen have to be sent in to carry out the injured before the paramedics can assist.

As a whole, *Emergency* shows promise but has too many individual flaws to be a worthwhile purchase. The developers should be commended for an original idea, but the execution is poor. We hope they've learned from their mistakes and their next effort will be a bit more polished.

RATING ★★☆☆☆





Trying to keep control of a chaotic situation in *Emergency* can sometimes be a test of patience

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GET MEDIEVAL

Platform: PC
Publisher: Monolith
Developer: Monolith

Get Medieval is just a tad sneaky. It comes decked out in the sword-and-sorcery trappings of an RPG, but that's rather deceiving. This is a top-down, dungeon-crawling, wise-cracking, arcade-shooting, 40-level pit filled with spiders, vultures, monsters, slimy reptiles, and one very mean dragon.

The game also carries a load of nostalgia for anyone old enough to have fed quarters to game machines in the 1980s, since at heart it's a souped-up version of *Gauntlet*. The characters and villains are different, but the mechanics are the same. You spend your time fending off waves of enemies, destroying their spawning nests, grabbing clumps of gold, scarfing down power-ups, and collecting all manner of protective armor, keys, and magic spells.

And it's fun, even for newcomers. You have a choice of four hero types: a muscle-bound Arnold Schwarzenegger soundalike, a smart-mouth elf, a sensuous sorceress, and a sexy female warrior. Each chatters incessantly as you move through the dungeon corridors (imagine the cacophony when all four get together in a multiplayer version).

So does the game offer anything new? Not really. But if you want to see how the pre-Pentium crowd lived, *Get Medieval* offers a pleasurable peek at the arcade arenas of the past, complete with chuckles.

RATING ★★★☆☆

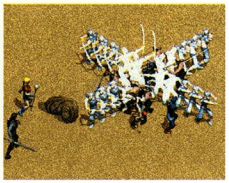


Sure, *Get Medieval* is basically a turbocharged *Gauntlet*, but it's colorful, fast, and, most important, fun

ICARUS: SANCTUARY OF THE GODS

Platform: PC
Publisher: JC Research
Developer: KRGsoft





***Icarus* isn't exceptional in any one way, but it provides a satisfying RPG experience nonetheless**

If you miss old-fashioned role-playing games, here's a small, inexpensive sleeper. An RPG/strategy game filled with knights, sorcerers, and archers on one side and a whole gaggle of monsters, necromancers, and dark demons on the other, *Icarus* takes you to a world on the brink of extinction.

Ercanet, the god of evil, is determined to destroy all human life. Dreus, a young warrior knight, and Helena, his mage sweetheart, must wander through villages to gain allies; buy, sell, and exchange useful items; fight their way through legions of goblins; and eventually confront Ercanet.

As the good guys gain strength and abilities, Ercanet's minions become more brutal. And they come in waves. That's what makes the game exciting. Detailed graphics, viewed from a 45° overhead angle, may remind you of *Diablo*, but only for a moment. The battles in *Icarus* are turn-based and tactical, not action-oriented. Compared with the cut-and-slash of *Diablo*, the pace of *Icarus* is slow, but as you struggle to develop strategies and stay alive, the game pulls you in.

Unfortunately, you must also contend with obligatory speeches from all the characters. The dialogue is stilted and simplistic, and it unwinds in a peculiar typeface. It also takes forever to get through some of the talking. But eventually, the story becomes engrossing and the battles downright vicious. If you hang in there, the game is eventually worth your time.

RATING ★★★☆☆

REVENGE OF THE ARCADE

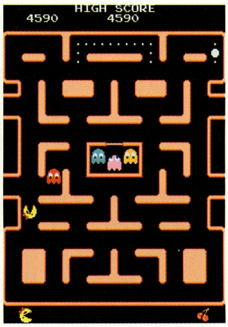
Platform: PC
Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Microsoft

This is a travesty. Why would anyone pay $35 to play Microsoft's officially sanctioned Namco arcade emulators when free emulation of every old arcade machine is available on dozens of web sites? Granted, such emulators are illegal, but they're also, by and large, a lot more stable than this load of crap, which slows down, takes up an unbelievable 36MB of hard disk space (for games that were originally smaller than 32K), and needs at least a Pentium 90 to perform at all. *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Xevious*, *Mappy*, and *Rally X* are the games on this compilation, with the obscure puzzle game *Motos* thrown in for spice. But you'd still have to be insane to justify the purchase price or the use of hard drive space.

Add to that the fact that (with the exception of *Ms. Pac-Man*) all these games are sort of past their sell-by date, and you have an unmitigated disaster, callously cashing in on people's misremembered childhood memories. Oh, and the emulator screen is too small (full-screen mode is a huge exaggeration). Pass this one by and keep running.

RATING ★☆☆☆☆





Microsoft's *Revenge of the Arcade*: If this is what it means to buy a legal emulator, we'd rather break the law

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NEED FOR SPEED III: HOT PURSUIT

Platform: PC
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts





***Need for Speed III* is one of the most enjoyable racing (or is that *chasing*) games available for PC**

In a market crammed with racing games, good ones are few and far between. That's why *Need for Speed III* is a breath of fresh air. With 13 cars and nine tracks, *Need for Speed III* offers more variety than your average racer, but beyond that, you can play the part of the law-breaking speeder or the police pursuer. Add the fine 3D-accelerated graphics, lightning-fast response to the controller, incredible weather effects, and impressively varied terrain, and you've got a winner.

The game's not without fault, however. The police AI isn't the best in the world when you're racing against the computer. Conversely, trying to pull over a speeding vehicle isn't as easy as it sounds and can get quite frustrating. Luckily, there's a multiplayer mode so you can take out your frustrations on your buddy, or seven of them, as the case may be (the game supports eight players over LAN or TCP/IP). The game also has a remote install, so you can install it on several machines with a single CD to play multiplayer.

The usual bonus cars and tracks are also included, which means you have a real reason to play through all the tracks. Even the tracks themselves have some hidden secrets, if you make the right turns.

With leaves kicking up in your wake and police sirens screaming behind you, racing around these tracks is second only to the real thing. If you thought this game was impressive on PlayStation, try the 3Dfx version — it virtually jumps off the screen.

RATING ★★★★☆

PLANE CRAZY

Platform: PC
Publisher: SegaSoft
Developer: Inner Workings, Ltd.







***Plane Crazy* looks good, but good looks aren't enough, and the gameplay is just shy of awful**

Every now and then, a game comes along that promises to be something grand, but in reality, it stinks more than a huge pile of pig ... well, you get the idea. *Plane Crazy* is one of those games.

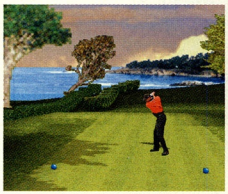
At first glance, it holds some promise — it's a racing game, but, get this, you're in a plane. You race around the track trying to beat the other planes. Glowing lights (power-up generators) are spread throughout the course, and if you fly through one, you get a power-up that lets you do a variety of things, such as firing attacks at your opponents or increasing your own speed. It's similar in theory to *Wipeout*, except once you fly through a generator, the power-ups start to cycle at the bottom of your screen, and you have to hit the fire button at the right time to get the one you want. The game is playable exclusively over SegaSoft's own Heat.net service, although you'd have to actually like the game to play it as a multiplayer.

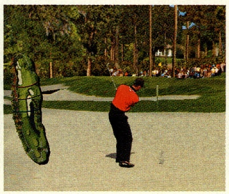
Control of your plane ranges from hard to impossible. After a while, you might get the hang of it, but the learning time is longer than most gamers' attention spans. The courses are also deviously difficult, especially the Sin City course, where you can hardly see anything in front of you. The graphics are pretty, but in today's age of gaming, pretty pictures just aren't enough to make a game great. And with this one, they hardly come close.

RATING ★★☆☆☆

TIGER WOODS GOLF '99

Platform: PC
Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Canada





***Tiger Woods Golf* is basically *PGA Tour Golf* with a Tiger Woods license tacked on, but that doesn't make it a bad game**

Tiger Woods is the marketing guy's dream. He's young and talented, and he brings something fresh and vibrant to a staid sport. Tiger Woods has a cool name, an awesome drive, and a pile of money as big as a house — and no doubt a chunk of that cash came from Electronic Arts to pay for the Tiger Woods license.

The game is based very closely on the current EA Sports *PGA Tour Golf* engine — good news for all but the innovation-minded. It plays well, it looks sharp, and it certainly does the license justice. There are no new game mechanics as such, but a perfect shot is taken from the mysterious "Tiger Zone."

Graphically, it's pretty and runs well on decent Pentium systems, but there are few frills and plenty of little glitches, including a remarkably hilly ocean and some near-insane camera angles. Still, this is a good arcade-style golf game.

It's also possible to cheat a little. Those two blobs, red and green, on the swing-o-meter allow you to choose between aggressive and safe shots. Both line up perfectly for you, so all you have to do is time the swing. This is one for younger (or much older) players perhaps, or those looking for mindless distraction.

The Tiger Woods license may have drawn attention, but it certainly didn't pay for extensive motion capture sessions. Tiger's motions are repetitive and often shot from the wrong angle, which is especially apparent in replays. Cynicism aside, it's a sharp golf game, compatible with last June's *PGA Tour Pro* software updates and course discs.

RATING ★★★☆☆

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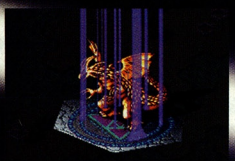


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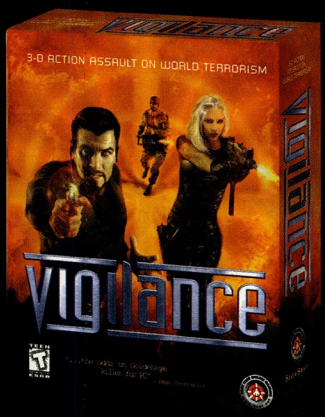








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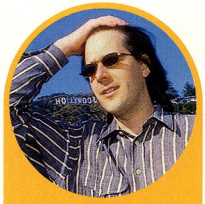
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SPYRO THE DRAGON

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SCEA
DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC STUDIOS/UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE



MARK CERNY

INTERVIEWED: MARK CERNY, PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE

Next Generation: Is there any advice you would give someone who was just picking up *Spyro* for the first time? Anything to keep in mind?
Mark Cerny: Since it is necessary to get 6,000 treasures to enter the sixth and final world, I make sure to collect a large portion of the treasure in the third and fourth worlds.

NG: When you play the game, what part of it do you personally find the most challenging? How do you get past it?
MC: The hardest part for me is performing all of the flying round tasks in a single pass. I recommend an analog joystick and lots of practice.

NG: Are you the best at your game?
MC: I don't know. I'm thinking of having a competition among the team to see who can finish the game fastest. I'll put up a large monetary prize, thus motivating me to practice a lot, become the best, and not have to pay out any money.

NG: When you watch other people playing *Spyro*, do they play through pretty much as you planned, or do they come up with things that surprise you?
MC: Actually, everyone has found a different route through the flying levels, including the ones where my level design had only one "correct" route.

The infamous Treetops hidden dragon that requires four jumps to reach by superdashing can apparently be reached by two additional ways, one which requires three jumps and one which needs only two!

NG: What's your best time?
MC: I've reached and beaten Gnasty Gnorc in 105 minutes. If anyone can beat that, please send me your time at mark.cerny@unistudios.com.

NG: Are there any in-jokes in *Spyro* — things that were added just for personal reasons among the design team members, that only they might get? What are they and how do they relate to the team?
MC: The second boss in the game is called Dr. Shemp, after a phrase we use in the office a lot, "Get the Shemp." Imagine you're watching cable late at night, and a *Three Stooges* movie comes on, but instead of Curly, you get Shemp. You don't want Shemp.

NG: Were any programming artifacts left in the game? Not bugs, per se, but more like "unanticipated features" — for instance, in *Sonic 2*, players going through loops too fast can fly off and get stuck in the background, or in *Defender*, there is an invisible line in the level that changes the behavior of enemies.
MC: If you glide next to a wall inclined 10 or 20 degrees from the vertical and push into it with your joypad, you will be able to glide quite a bit longer. This does not work on perfectly vertical walls.

NG: Any amusing bugs or glitches in the shipping version?
MC: Stand on the train tracks in Sunny Flight and use the green triangle button to look far to the right. Let the timer run down. Restart the time trial, but don't use the flame button. Spyro will fly around the level with his head pointing at an impossible angle to his right.









NG: What were your major influences on the design?
MC: *Mario 64, Crash Bandicoot, Disruptor, Earthworm Jim.*

NG: What section or level of *Spyro* are you most proud of, either from a design standpoint or just because you thought it looked great?
MC: The four-jump Treetops superdash sequence.

NG: What ideas for the game ended up on the cutting room floor?
MC: Most of them — missions, use of items, long-distance shooting.



HALF-LIFE TEAM

HALF-LIFE

PLATFORM: PC
PUBLISHER: SIERRA
DEVELOPER: VALVE

INTERVIEWED: GABE NEWELL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, VALVE

Next Generation: What was the design theory behind *Half-Life*? In other words, what kinds of strategies did you hope the player would need to use?





Gabe Newell: There are a bunch of puzzle elements in the game, and in general they are intended to be solved by thinking about the problems you are facing as if they were in the real world.

There's a lot of exploration in the game, and basically the more difficult a place is to get to, the more you will be rewarded for getting there.

There's no simple strategy for fighting the creatures and humans you encounter, since the AI for each is very different. Overall you can learn a lot about how to defeat monsters by watching the monsters fight each other.

NG: What is it about the creatures and monsters that makes them such difficult opponents? How are they different from those in other games?
GN: There are a bunch of creatures in *Half-Life* that can work as groups, such as the Human Grunts, the Alien Grunts, and so on. Having them use team tactics makes them a lot harder to fight even though their individual choices are very different. Having a layer in the AI that understands roles, supporting lines of fire, retreating, and ambushing means that you can't have some single strategy for engaging your enemies.

NG: Are you the best at your game on the team?
GN: Not even close. Several of the people at Valve have won international competitions. I used to think I was pretty hot stuff when I was just playing against other people at Microsoft, but nowadays I just get crushed.

We may have to do a strategy game just so I can regain my self esteem. Either that or add a deathmatch mode to *Mario 64*.

NG: Watching other people play *Half-Life* must be an interesting, educational experience. As play-testing went on, what sorts of things surprised you?
GN: We are always surprised by how different the tactics are that people will use in playing *Half-Life*. Some people are very cautious, explore everywhere, and really pay close attention to the story and what the other people in the game are doing. Others just run around and smash things with the crowbar. Part of making a good single-player experience is making sure the world is rich enough and the AI is sophisticated enough to accommodate all of the different styles of play. In the multiplayer game, we're still discovering all of the different tactics you can use given the capabilities of the multiplayer environments and the weapons. For example, just the other day I got killed when someone figured out that they could leave a satchel charge by the switch that floods and seals one of the multiplayer levels. There are a bunch of places where you know where people are by the sounds they make, and everybody started figuring out how to play the game by sound rather than just by sight.

I used to think I was pretty hot stuff ... but nowadays I just get crushed. We may have to do a strategy game just so I can regain my self-esteem. **Either that or add a deathmatch mode to *Mario 64***

NG: In playing it yourself, what has been your most satisfying moment?
GN: I actually killed [fellow *Half-Life* designer] Dario Casali once in his own level.

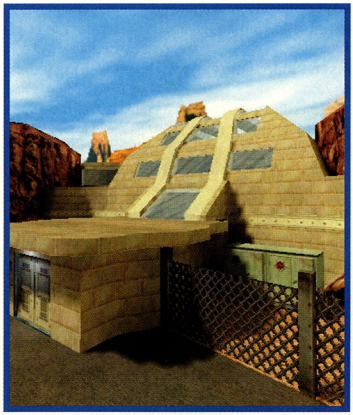
NG: What part of the game are you most proud of? Is there any one moment in *Half-Life* that you felt you really nailed?
GN: This has changed a bunch during the development of the game, but right now my favorite moment is the

end of the game. I really think people will be a bit troubled by the choice they have to make at the end.

NG: On the other hand, there must have been things you wanted in the game that just didn't make it.
GN: Probably the biggest aspect from a story perspective was Gordon's wife. She actually was a co-worker who was in the lab with Gordon when everything starts to go to hell. Unfortunately, she didn't work with some other parts of the game, and Marc Laidlaw had to convince me that leaving her out would make the rest of the story stronger.

I had an idea for a "matter converter" that would have given the player a lot more control over how the inventory was managed. That got cut.

In general, though, *Half-Life* is pretty much everything we set out do. That's a big part of why it's taken so long to get the game done.



NG: What were your big influences while designing *Half-Life*?

***Resident Evil 2* really inspired us to take the creepiness and horror in *Half-Life* seriously,** without giving in to the temptation to be campy about it

GN: The three games that had the biggest impact on *Half-Life* were *Ultima Underworld, Mario 64*, and *Resident Evil 2. Ultima Underworld* was so much more of an immersive experience than the other first-person shooters. *Resident Evil 2* really inspired us to take the creepiness and horror in *Half-Life* seriously, without giving in to the temptation to be campy about it. *Mario 64* is just a great inspiration on so many levels from things like having spaces that can be traversed multiple times and still be fun to a much less punitive method of handling player failure.



NG: You seem to have played a lot of first-person games. Is there anything you added to *Half-Life* just because you always wanted to see it?
GN: There was a design meeting once when we were all sitting around harping on how a lot of first-person action games were nothing but button puzzles. Find a door, find the button to open the door, so you can go find more buttons, keys, and doors.

A couple of days later, Brett Johnson asked me to come into his office. He showed me this elevator area pretty early on in the game. The button to the elevator is sparking, and there's a sign above the elevator that basically says, "Don't push the button, dummy." If you do, there's this explosion and an elevator goes plummeting past with a bunch of your screaming co-workers. This was both something that fit into the game itself and was an inside joke for people in the industry about "Enough with the damn button puzzles, already."



GAME SHARK CODES

NOTE: You must have a Game Shark peripheral in order to enter any of the following codes in this section (as provided by the very nice people at Interact Accessories).

PLAYSTATION

TENCHU

Shuriken	3001040d0063
Caltraps	3001040e0063
Health Potions	3001040f0063
Grenade	300104100063
Smoke Bomb	300104110063
Mines	300104120063
Poison Rice	300104130063
Colored Rice	300104140063
Sleeping Gas	300104150063
Resurrection Leaf	300104160063
Chameleon Spell	300104170063
Protection Amulet	300104180063
Lightfoot Scroll	300104190063
Shadow Decoy	3001041a0063
Dog Bones	3001041c0063
Fire Eater Scroll	3001041d0063
Decoy Whistle	3001041e0063
Ninja Armor	3001041f0063
No Carry Limit	
d01ffdf80002	801ffdf80000

FUTURE COP: L.A.P.D.

Infinite Armor	800582702400
Infinite Ammo	8006bc782400

Red Team
999 Points in Precinct Assault
801fbf6003e7
Red Team
0 Points in Precinct Assault
801fbf600000
Blue Team
999 Points in Precinct Assault
801fbf6403e7
Blue Team
0 Points in Precinct Assault
801fbf640000

CIRCUIT BREAKERS

Nighttime Mode
800a6d0c0001
Race Upside Down
800a6e280001

PARASITE EVE

Note: Do not change weapons during battle, or the

CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SCEA
DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG/UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE



JASON RUBIN





INTERVIEWED: JASON RUBIN, PRESIDENT, NAUGHTY DOG

Next Generation: As one of the game's designers, you must have an inside track on the best way to play through *Warped*. Any advice for the rest of us?

Jason Rubin: There are three challenges in every level in *Crash 3*. First, the player has to get a crystal from each new level. This may seem like a simple task as the player goes through the level for the first time, but it is their introduction to the layout of the round. They'll be back.

Next, the player has to gather gems. On each level, there is a gem given for box completion. I try to break every box the first time through the level, along with gathering the crystal. If I miss one or three, then I didn't see them. If I missed six or more, then there is probably a hidden path that I didn't have access to yet. On most levels, I can get the crystal and gem in one run through. The other types of gems, I stumble upon during play.

Finally, there is time-trial mode. I run through to get a feel for the level first. Maybe I have some strategies that I thought up during the previous crystal/gem run. Maybe I don't. I experiment. Once I have set a good time, I push that strategy until I don't think I can do it any better. Usually at about that time, just when I'm feeling good, another Naughty Dog will lay their best time on me. I start over ... obviously there is a strategy I missed.

NG: Is there any part of the game you find particularly difficult? Anything that gives you or your play-testers a rough time?

JR: Some of the motorcycle levels in *Crash 3* are quite hard. But every time the players we tested tried them, they got better. In surveys, they rated these levels as some of their favorites. Basically, they are about trying again and again to get through.

NG: In watching the play-testers (or just anyone playing the game) do you ever get surprised by some of the things they do or the way they play?

JR: Absolutely. Testing the time-trial mode has been incredibly educating for Naughty Dog. The testers have found new strategies that radically reduce their times. For example, on one level, a specific tester had a speed that was four seconds better than anyone else. To put this in perspective, the other testers were getting times within hundredths of seconds of each other. It turns out that he was using the bazooka to shoot the time clock and start the time-trial mode *after* he had worked his way a distance into the level.

Now, Naughty Dog looks for shortcuts. There is always an angle. Just because the game works one way for us doesn't mean that a tester won't find a shortcut that changes the entire balancing of the game. In effect, you ask the testers to try to cheat. That way, you cover all of the ways the game might be played.

NG: What about while designing and coding the game? Were there any "unanticipated features" that surprised you as well?

***Crash: Warped* was the outlet for the elements we wanted to do for *Crash 2* but felt were too risky for a second title.** With *Crash: Warped*, we let down our hair, so to speak, and just went with the instinct

JR: As I am writing this, *Crash 3* is in debug. Hopefully, we will get out all of the "unanticipated features" by the time it releases. Then again, there is always something that sneaks in there.

NG: Any amusing bugs or glitches in the shipping version?

JR: Hopefully not. And, by the way, they are *never* amusing to the developer!

NG: Are you the best at your game on the team?

JR: No. Evan Wells, one of the Naughty Dog designers,

can beat the Naughty Dogs at almost all games. OK, most games and most of the time. He is one of those savant gamers. For me, it's always about putting in the hours.

NG: So what is your best score?
JR: Actually, the best times of the Naughty Dogs, Sony testers, Mark Cerny (our producer), and magazine editors will be listed in the credits of *Crash 3*. Good luck.

NG: Is there anything else like that going into the game? Personal touches that someone at Naughty Dog might get but that the average player might not appreciate? Come on, 'fess up.
JR: There is a stylized picture of Morgan, the Naughty Dog company dog, on the wall of the Egyptian levels. And there are some other elements that highlight elements from the worldwide Crash advertising campaign. Maybe we will release the codes some time.

NG: Can we get the names of everyone on the team?
JR: Andy Gavin, Jason Rubin, Bob Rafei, Justin Monast, Rob Titus, Charlotte Francis, Eric Iwasaki, Eric Pangilinan, Joe Labbe, Stephen White, Greg Omi, Dan Arey, Malcolm Hee, Evan Wells, Danny Chan, and Mark Cerny from Universal Interactive Studios.

NG: What games influenced the design of the game?
JR: Everything from the 8- and 16-bit *Mario* series, *Sonic, Donkey Kong Country 1* & *2*, *Metroid*, etc. We look at *Crash* as the literal 3D descendant of the classic side-scrolling platform game.





NG: *Warped* is the third in the series, so what aspects of the final product, this third time around, did you think worked out best?
JR: Personally, I like the voice-overs that Clancy Brown did for Dr. Neo Cortex and Uka Uka (the two main evil arch enemies of Crash). There is actual acting in the voice, not the usual game recitals. Rob Titus' lip synch and facial expressions and the Naughty Dog animators' body emotion seem to give life to Cortex.

NG: In every game there are compromises. Was there anything extra you wish you could have done?
JR: With *Crash Bandicoot: Warped*, we knew what we wanted to do from the start. Almost nothing was cut. I guess that two previous titles had taught us what worked and what didn't. We had always wanted to do a free-roaming water level, as well as put Crash in planes and motorcycles. At one point we were thinking about a snowboard-like hover-thingy for Crash's use in the future levels, but everybody is doing snowboards and hover-thingies these days, so we never let that get very far.

Crash: Warped was the outlet for the elements we wanted to do for *Crash 2* but felt were too risky for a second title. With *Crash: Warped*, we let down our hair, so to speak, and just went with instinct. I think that it worked out better than expected.



game will lock up.

Maximum AT Points
800b8a30ffff

Infinite Health
800b8a2c03e7 800b8a3c03e7

Quick Level Gain
8009cfe8ffff

Start with SMG
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Maximum Item Slots
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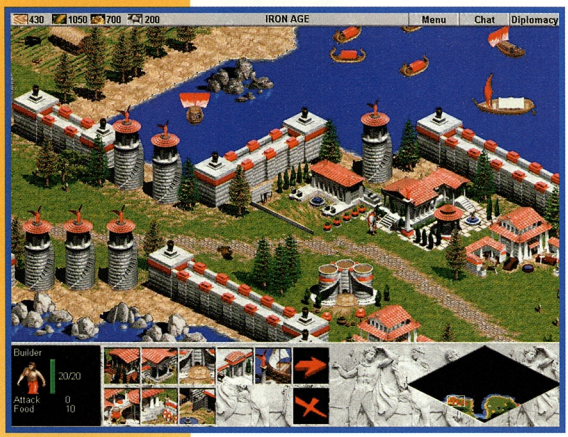
BRUCE SHELLEY

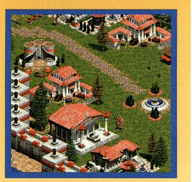
AGE OF EMPIRES

PLATFORM: PC
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
DEVELOPER: ENSEMBLE STUDIOS

INTERVIEWED: BRUCE SHELLEY, LEAD DESIGNER, ENSEMBLE STUDIOS

Next Generation: Can we get the names of everyone on the team?
Bruce Shelley: The credits for *AOE* are in the manual.





The Ensemble Studio credits for the *Rise of Rome Expansion Pack* are design: Sandy Petersen; programming: Time Deen (lead), Angelo Laudon, Dave Pottinger, Matt Pritchard, Paul Bettner; art: Scott Winsett (lead), Duane Santos, Duncan McKissick, Herb Ellwood, Thonny Namuonglo; sound: Chris Rippy (lead); music: Stephen Rippy (lead), David Rippy; administration: Nellie Sherman; business: Bob Wallace, Brian Moon; production: Harter Ryan, Brian Sullivan, Tony Goodman; scenarios: Chris Rippy, Greg Street, Bruce Shelley; quality assurance and play testing: Chris Campbell (lead), Chea O'Neill, Chris Van Doren, Don Gagen, David Lewis, Ian Fischer, John Evanson, Mark Terrano, Mario Grimani, Sean Wolff, Trey Taylor; Web support: Mike McCart.

In addition, about 30 people from Microsoft are listed in the credits.

NG: Since you're the lead designer on *Age of Empires*, we're sure the readers would love to know how you personally play the game. Any strategies or tactical advice you can give us?
BS: I usually build up and hope no one comes after me until I am ready. Rarely works. I am not a rusher, and that style of play seems to dominate. I enjoy building up and exploring. While I am doing that I usually get overrun. The new civs and units in the *Rise of Rome Expansion Pack* give me some help. I can build Slingers and Camel Riders to help hold off an early rush.

NG: So what particular things in *Age of Empires* challenge you? What aspect of the game gives you fits and keeps you up at night?
BS: I find it difficult to do all the things that one needs to do at the same time. I can build up, I can explore, I can defend, and I can attack, but I can't do them all at once. This puts me at a big disadvantage. I find it difficult to choose a minimum amount of technologies so I can accelerate through the ages and build an effective army quickly. All the technologies seem useful, so I have difficulty picking only a minimum needed.

I usually pick two military units that will be the core of my army and select technologies that enhance only them. I am always tempted to go for economic technologies, however. There I usually go for farming upgrades, coinage, and wood gathering upgrades.

NG: Would you consider yourself the best at this game? If not, who on the team is?
BS: At Ensemble Studios, the game designers and management are generally in the remedial group. Our programmers are generally the best, then the artists, then design/management. I consider myself a representative of the casual gamers. If I like it and am having fun, then I believe a lot of nonhardcore players will also. We have plenty of people in the hardcore category to ensure that group will like it.

NG: What's the best you personally have ever done?
BS: I've never kept track. The best game I recall was a multiplayer deathmatch where I took out one player while two others exhausted themselves. When I showed up in the home base of the other survivor, he had nothing left to hold me off.

NG: In between the initial release and designing the expansion pack, did any techniques or strategies the players had come up with influence things you put into *Rise of Rome*?
BS: During development of *AOE*, we played games mostly in the Iron Age. Everyone built up as quickly as possible to that Age and then fought with high-end units. We were surprised to see how popular rushing was on the Internet Gaming Zone. Some of the things we have done with the *Rise of Rome Expansion Pack* are intended to make rushing less attractive. These changes include Slingers and Camel Rider units, cheap and good against Archers and Cavalry respectively. Based on the feedback we have received, we have adjusted some of the civilizations in the original game

to slow them down slightly. The expansion pack gives us a chance to make some small but significant adjustments to the balance of the game. I think people still have some things to learn about *AOE*. Mark Thomas, a tester at Microsoft for *AOE*, was devastating with Priests. I still don't think many people are using them effectively. We are surprised at how detailed people get in their analysis. I have seen long papers on the Web discussing how to play just the first few minutes of a game. We didn't put a lot of emphasis on keeping track of how long it took a player to get to the various ages, for example.

We're pleased that the game offers enough depth to invite that sort of analysis by the hardcore gamers, while casual gamers can still have a lot of fun with it at a much more basic level.

NG: Is there anything you wish you could have put into either *Age of Empires* or *Rise of Rome* that you just couldn't fit in? Why?

BS: We put off production queues and formations for a future game. Based on how well queues are working in the *Rise of Rome*, maybe we should have worked harder to get them in the first time. We changed the mix of civilizations. When the game was first designed, it was to end around 1000 B.C. We included the Philistines and Hebrews at that point. We then decided to include the Greeks and Persians, dropping out the Mycenaeans, Hebrews, and Philistines. The time frame drifted further when we added Asia, but Rome never made it in. That left Rome available when we were looking for a theme for our expansion pack. The *Rise of Rome* has a great theme (the Roman Empire) and serves as a good bridge to *AOE II: Age of Kings,* which takes place in the Middle Ages.

NG: All right. Still, did you manage to put any personal touches into the game? There are units and other things here and there that, while not too obvious at first, seem a bit odd or humorous.

BS: Most of these were put in just for fun. The big car in *Age of Empires* was the work of Scott Winsett, one of our lead artists, who is a drag racer in his spare time. There are also a few new surprises in the expansion pack. However, I'd rather not say what they are at this point.

NG: Almost every game that goes out the door has a few undetected bugs. Are there any amusing bugs or glitches in the shipping version?

BS: We had a few glitches that surfaced in the intense multiplayer games on the Zone, but none I remember as amusing. We were surprised at the things people would try, looking for an advantage, like deleting your Town Center at the start of a high-resources game and immediately building several simultaneously. This allowed you to build a lot of villagers fast.

NG: What other games were the inspiration for *Age of Empires*? Have there been any specific influences?

BS: *AOE* was influenced by *WarCraft, Command & Conquer*, and *Civilization*. We attempted to identify what were the best features of those games and create a hybrid of realtime and turn-based strategy. Because *AOE* is realtime strategy, it is most heavily influenced by the realtime competition. During the development of *AOE*, *WarCraft II* came out and that had an influence. We thought we could add more of the empire building from *Civilization* to the conflict of the realtime games. We were trying to create a game with broad appeal, and the sales so far indicate we succeeded.

The best [*Age of Empires*] game I recall was a multiplayer deathmatch where I took out one player while two others exhausted themselves ... the other survivor ... **had nothing left to hold me off**

NG: Now that the game is finished, what aspect of *Age of Empires* are you especially proud of? What's your own personal favorite part of the game?

BS: I like the start because I am tied with everyone at that point. Actually, I do like the beginning. Sid Meier told me recently that he thinks the first 15 minutes of a game are critical. We think *AOE* has a great first 15 minutes. The combat is certainly exciting, but I don't play that intense part of the game particularly well, so I don't find it as enjoyable as the start.





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SPYRO

Infinite Lives	8007582c0009
Infinite Health	80078bbc0003

Infinite Lives (Crash Demo)
800aaeb06300

N64

BOMBERMAN HERO

Infinite Lives
801652430009
Infinite Health
801652440004
Extra Gems

d01652410000	80165241004b

Full Bomb Power
8016523f0003
Press GS Button for All OD Bombs
8805749500ff
8805749600ff
8805749700ff

NASCAR '99

1 Lap to Race	800438b30009
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d022359b0000	8022359b0008



MIKE ELLIS

COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS
DEVELOPER: PSYGNOSIS

INTERVIEWED: MIKE ELLIS, LEAD PROJECT DESIGNER, PSYGNOSIS

Next Generation: First of all, how good are you at your own game?
Mike Ellis: Given the amount of time that I've spent playing both *CW* and *CW:V*, I'd like to think I'm a seriously good player. However, I'm sure that some of the lads in the QA department could give me a close run.

NG: Fair enough. So, are there any tips or tactics you could give the rest of us, from an insider's perspective?
ME: With *CW* and *CW:V* it's mostly about assessing what is happening around you in the mission and taking appropriate action using the best tactics and weapons for the job. Some views can be more helpful than others at times, and some weapons can be employed for jobs that aren't their primary use.







NG: What's your personal best time?
ME: I've never really timed myself playing *CW* or *CW:V*. This is mainly because the ways in which finished games are played, and in production games are designed, tweaked, and tested, are very different.

NG: What do you do to challenge yourself, then? Is there anything in *Vengeance* you do just to see if you can, for an extra thrill?
ME: I find it a good challenge to engage the fighters in the last few acts with only Plasma cannons and torpedo weapons, as the player has to be much more precise. This a real test of skill!

NG: Besides setting yourself an extra challenge, is there anything that you do just for fun, or that you feel particularly satisfied with as a designer?
ME: I quite like playing around with the particle gun, as steering the particle bolt around the mission can be a good laugh.

It's also funny when you see the look on people's faces when they first meet the Spider mech, or the Astro cannon uncloaks and wastes a huge Battle Cruiser with one shot.

NG: OK. What about watching other's play? In either the testing stage or since, have players come up with strategies you never thought of?
ME: I think just by the very nature that games are created, there is always the odd surprise that was never anticipated or designed. Sometimes these are a boon to the game, as with *Quake*'s rocket jumps; other times they are a serious flaw. But I'm not naming any names!

NG: Speaking of names, can we get the names of everyone on the team?
ME: Lead game designer: Mike Ellis; designers: Chris Graham, Steve Balmer, Andy Santos; lead programmer: Mike Anthony; programming: Mike Anthony, Dave Berrisford, Gavin Dodd, Chris Roberts; art director: Dave Crook; in-game 3D artists: Gary Burley, John Dwyer, Han Randhawa; production design: Dave Crook, Han Randhawa, Jim Bowers; CG movies: Jim Bowers, Christian Lavoie, Dan Levy, John Dwyer; CG post-production and editing: Steve Gilbert; central product development manager: Dawn Paine; project manager: David Riley; creative writing: Damon Fairclough; associate producer: Trevor Jones; producer: Lol Scragg.

NG: What do you consider *Colony Wars'* most direct inspirations?
ME: During the production of the *Colony Wars* games we played all the space games (regardless of platform and genre) available as we were assessing the competition. Personally, I really enjoyed LucasArts' *Star Wars* sims and the Nintendo *Star Fox* games.

However, I think it would be truer to say that the team's influences have come more from sci-fi, TV, and movies such as *Star Wars, Star Trek, Bab 5*, and *Star Fleet*.

NG: Was anything left out that you wish had gone in?
ME: There were *tons* of ideas that unfortunately we never had the time or room to implement. I think the biggest shame was that we weren't able to take the upgrades and customization as far as we wanted to.



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THE GAMER'S GUIDE

The quintessential guide to released software

Welcome to the Gamer's Guide, the ultimate resource for checking what games to buy. Every month we add the reviews from last issue and push out an equal number of older ones. Which ones, you ask? Generally we leave the console titles in, even for games that are out of print, since there's a large used market. So PC games get dumped first, especially old, really bad PC titles (which, paradoxically, makes PC games look really, really good if you just check the ratings). Once again, please note the issue number — technology and game design march on relentlessly, so a game that got ★★★★ in **NG 6** might be hard-pressed to score ★★★ today.

Nintendo 64

title	publisher	rating	#
1080° Snowboarding	Nintendo	★★★★★	42
Aero Fighters Assault	Video Systems Inc.	★★★	36
Aero Gauge	Ascii	★★★	39
All Star Baseball '99	Acclaim	★★★★	43
Automobili Lamborghini 64	Titus	★★	37
Banjo-Kazooie	Nintendo	★★★★	43
Blast Corps	Nintendo	★★★★	31
Clay Fighter 63 1/3	Interplay	★★	36
Cruisin' USA	Nintendo	★	26
Dark Rift	Vic Tokai	★★★	31
Diddy Kong Racing	Nintendo	★★★★	37
Doom 64	Williams	★★★	29
Duke Nukem 64	GT Interactive	★★★	37
Extreme-G	Acclaim	★★★★	37
F-Zero X	Nintendo	★★★★★	46
HF1 Pole Position 64	Ubi Soft	★★★	36
FIFA Road to the World Cup 64	Electronic Arts	★★★★	38
FIFA Soccer 64	Electronic Arts	★★	30
Fighter's Destiny	Ocean	★★★★	41
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★	43
Goldeneye 007	Nintendo	★★★★★	34
GT 64	Infogrames	★	47
Hexen	GT Interactive	★★	32
International Superstar Soccer	Konami	★★★★★	32
International Superstar Soccer 98	Konami	★★★★	44
Killer Instinct Gold	Nintendo	★★	26
Mace: The Dark Age	Midway	★★	37
Madden 64	Electronic Arts	★★	37
Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	★★★	30
Mike Piazza's Strike Zone	GT Interactive	★	44
Mission: Impossible	Ocean	★★★	44
Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	★★★	44
Multi Racing Championship	Ocean	★★★★	33
Mystical Ninja	Konami	★★★	45
NBA Hangtime	Williams	★★	29
NBA in the Zone 64	Konami	★	41
Olympic Hockey '98	Midway	★	41
PilotWings 64	Nintendo	★★★★	21
QBC 64	Acclaim	★★★	37
Quake 64	Midway	★★★	41
Quest 64	THQ	★★★	43
Rampage World Tour	Midway	★★	41
Roboiron 64	Crave Entertainment	★★★	39
San Francisco Rush	Midway Home	★★★★	36
Shadows of the Empire	Nintendo	★★	26
Snowboard Kids	Atlus Software	★★★	40
StarFox 64	Nintendo of America	★★★★	32
Super Mario 64	Nintendo	★★★★★	21
Tetrisphere	Nintendo	★★★	35
Top Gear Rally	Midway	★★★★	37
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	Acclaim	★★★	28
Turok 2: Seeds of Evil	Acclaim	★★★★★	47
Virtual Chess 64	Titus	★★★	47
War Gods	Midway	★	31
WaveRace 64	Nintendo	★★★★★	25
Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey	Midway	★★★	29
Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98	Midway	★★	39
Wetrix	Ocean	★★★	44
Yoshi's Story	Nintendo	★★	41
Yuke Yuke Troublemakers	Enix	★★★	34

PlayStation

title	publisher	rating	#
2Xtreme	SCEA	★★	25
Abe's Oddysee	GT Interactive	★★★★	35
Ace Combat 2	Namco	★★★★	35
Adidas Power Soccer	Psygnosis	★★★	21
Adventures of Lomax, The	Psygnosis	★★	26
Alien Trilogy	Acclaim	★★★★	18
Alundra	Working Designs	★★★★	38
Andretti Racing	Electronic Arts	★★★★	25
Arc the Lad	SCEA	★★★★	10
Area 51	Midway	★★	27
Armored Core	SCEA	★★★★	37
Atari Collection One, The	Midway	★★★★	27
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	★★★	39
Azure Dreams	Konami	★★	44
BallBlazer Champions	LucasArts	★★★	31
Batman and Robin	Acclaim	★★	47
Battlestations	Electronic Arts	★★	31
Beyond the Beyond	SCEA	★★	23
Black Dawn	Virgin	★★★★	23
Blast Chamber	Activision	★★★	25
Blasto	SCEA	★★	42
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	Activision	★★★★	24
Bloody Roar	SCEA	★★★★	41
Bogey Dead 6	SCEA	★★★	22
Bottom of the Ninth	Konami	★★★★	19
BRAHMA Force	Jaleco	★★★	30
Bravo Air Race	THQ	★★★	34
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	★★★★	41
Broken Helix	Konami	★★★	32
Bubsy 3D	Accolade	★★	26
Bug Riders	GT Interactive	★★	37
Burning Road	Playmates	★★★	27
Bushido Blade	Sony	★★★★★	31
Bushido Blade 2	SquareSoft	★★★★	43
Bust-a-Move	Enix	★★★★	41
Buster Bros Collection	Capcom	★★★	30
Cardinal SYN	SCEA	★★	43
Carnage Heart	SCEA	★★★★	28
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	★★★★	36
Circuit Breakers	Mindscape	★★★★	45
Clock Tower	Ascii	★★★★	37
Codename Tenka	Psygnosis	★★★	28
Colony Wars	Psygnosis	★★★★★	38
Contra: Legacy of War	Konami	★★★	25
Cool Boarders	SCEA	★★★	27
Cool Boarders 2	SCEA	★★★	37
Courier Crisis	GT Interactive	★	37
Crash 2: Cortex Strikes Back	SCEA	★★★★	37
Crash Bandicoot	SCEA	★★★	23
Croc: the Legend of the Gobbos	Fox Interactive	★★★	35
Crow: City of Angels, The	Acclaim	★	30
Crusader: No Remorse	Origin	★★★★	29
Cyberia	Interplay	★★★	16
Dark Forces	LucasArts	★★★	26
Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	★★★	43
Dark Stalkers	Capcom	★★★	16
Darklight Conflict	Electronic Arts	★★	34
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	★★★★	37
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	★	42
Deception	Tecmo	★★★	24
Descent	Interplay	★★★★	17
Descent Maximum	Interplay	★★★	29
Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	★★★★	11
Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	★★★★	25
Devil Dice	THQ	★★★★	47
Diablo	Electronic Arts	★★★★	42
Die Hard Trilogy	Fox Interactive	★★★★	23
Disney's Hercules	Virgin Interactive	★★	34
Disruptor	Universal Interactive	★★★★	24
Divide: Enemies Within, The	Viacom New Media	★★	28
Doom	Williams	★★★★	15
Dragon Ball GT Final Bout	Bandai	★	39
DragonHeart: Fire & Steel	Acclaim	★	28
Dynasty Warriors	KOEI	★★★★	32
Einhander	SCEA	★★★★	40
Fade to Black	Electronic Arts	★★★★	21
Fantastic 4	Acclaim	★	35
Felony 11-79	Ascii	★★★	34
FIFA '97	Electronic Arts	★	26
Fighting Force	Eidos	★★★	37
Final Doom	Williams	★★★	24
Final Fantasy Tactics	SCEA	★★★★	40
Final Fantasy VII	SCEA	★★★★★	34
Floating Runner	THQ	★★	27
Formula 1	Psygnosis	★★★★★	24
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★	43
Frank Thomas Baseball	Acclaim	★★	32
Frogger	Hasbro Interactive	★	37
G Darius	THQ	★★★	46
GameDay '97	Sony	★★★★★	27
Gex	Crystal Dynamics	★★★	15
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Crystal Dynamics	★★★	42
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	★★★	35
Goal Storm '97	Konami	★★★★	30
Granstream Saga	THQ	★★	44
Gran Turismo	SCEI	★★★★★	40
Grand Slam	Virgin	★★	31
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	★★★	36
Gridrunner	Virgin Interactive	★★★	23
Gunner's Heaven	Media Vision	★★★★	08
Gunship	MicroProse	★★	22
Hardball 5	Accolade Sports	★★	19
Heart of Darkness	Interplay	★★	47
Herc's Adventures	LucasArts	★★★	35
Hot Shots Golf	SCE	★★★★	41
In the Zone	Konami	★★★	14
In the Zone 2	Konami	★★★★	26
Independence Day	Fox	★★	29
Iron & Blood: Warriors of Ravenloft	Acclaim	★★	24
Jersey Devil	MegaToon	★★★	44
Jet Moto	SCEA	★★★★	27
Jet Moto 2	SCEA	★★★	37
Judge Dredd	Activision	★	42
Jumping Flash!	SCEA	★★★★★	08
Jumping Flash! 2	SCEA	★★★★	20
K-1 The Arena Fighters	THQ	★★	30
Kartia	Atlus	★★★★	45
Kileak the Blood	SCEA	★★★	05
Kileak the Blood 2	SCEA	★★	16
King's Field	Ascii	★★★★	16
King's Field II	Ascii	★★★	26
Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	★★★	17
League of Pain	Psygnosis	★★★	30
Loaded	Interplay	★★★★	14
Lode Runner	Natsume	★★★	39
Lost World: Jurassic Park, The	Electronic Arts	★★	34
Machine Hunter	MGM Interactive	★	34
Madden '97	EA Sports	★★★★	24
Madden '98	Electronic Arts	★★★	35
Madden '99	Electronic Arts	★★	47
March Madness '98	Electronic Arts	★★	42
MechWarrior 2	Activision	★★★★	31
Mega Man X 4	Capcom	★★★	36
MegaMan 8	Capcom	★★	29
MegaMan Legends	Capcom	★★★	47
Micro Machines V3	Midway	★★★★	39
Midway Collection 2, The	Midway	★★★★	38
MLB '99	SCEA	★★★★	46
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	★★★★★	38
Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	★★	46
Mortal Kombat Mythologies	Midway	★	38
Moto Racer	Electronic Arts	★★★★★	36
Motor Toon Grand Prix	SCEA	★★★★	26
N2O	Fox	★★★	45
Nagano Winter Olympics 98	Konami	★★★★	39
Namco Museum Volume 1	Namco	★★★★	21
Namco Museum Volume 2	Namco	★★	24
Namco Museum Volume 3	Namco	★★★	27
Nanotek Warrior	Virgin	★★★★	27
NASCAR Racing	Sierra	★★	24
NBA Jam Extreme	Acclaim	★★	28
NBA JAM TE	Iguana Entertainment	★★★★	12
NBA Live '96	Electronic Arts	★★★★	19
NBA Live '97	Electronic Arts	★★	25
NBA Shoot Out	SCEA	★★★	19
NBA Shoot Out '97	SCEA	★★★★	30
NCAA Gamebreaker	SCEA	★★★★	24
NCAA Gamebreaker '98	SCEA	★★★★★	38
Need For Speed II	Electronic Arts	★★	32
Need For Speed III	Electronic Arts	★★★★	43
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	★★	41
NFL Blitz	Midway	★★★★	47
NFL GameDay	SCEA	★★★★★	14
NFL GameDay '98	SCEA	★★★★★	35
NFL GameDay '99	989 Studios	★★★★★	47
NFL Xtreme	989 Sports	★★	46
NHL '97	Electronic Arts	★★★	25
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	★★★★	36
NHL Breakaway '98	Acclaim	★★★	37
NHL Face Off	SCEA	★★★★★	15
NHL Face Off '97	SCEA	★★★★	25
NHL Face Off '98	SCEA	★★★	36
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	★★★	38
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	★★★	36
Olympic Soccer	U.S. Gold	★★★	21
One	ASC Games	★★	39
Open Ice Challenge	Midway	★★	28
OverBlood	Electronic Arts	★★	31
Pandemonium	Electronic Arts	★★★	25
PaRappa the Rapper	SCEA	★★★★★	35
Parasite Eve	Square Electronic Arts	★★★	45
Peak Performance	Atlus	★★★	28
Perfect Weapon	ASC Games	★★	24
Persona	Atlus	★★★	27
PGA '98	Electronic Arts	★★★	36
Pitball	Accolade	★★★	25
Pitfall 3D	Activision	★★	42
PO'ed	Accolade	★★★★	19
Pocket Fighter	Capcom	★★★	45
Point Blank	Namco	★★★	40
Porsche Challenge	SCEA	★★★★	35
Power Move Wrestling	Activision	★★★	26
Powerboat Racing	VR Sports	★★	42

Pay Poy	Konami	★★★★	33
Pro Pinball	Interplay	★★★	26
Project Overkill	Konami	★★★★	23
Project: Horned Owl	Sony	★★	22
Psychic Force	Taito	★★	25
Punky Skunk	Jaleco	★	42
Rage Racer	Namco	★★★	32
Rally Cross	Sony	★★★★	30
Rascal	Psygnosis	★★	43
Rayman	Ubi Soft	★★★★	10
ReBoot	EA	★★★	43
Re-Loaded	Interplay	★★	27
Rebel Assault 2	LucasArts	★★	26
Red Asphalt	Interplay	★★	37
Resident Evil	Capcom	★★★★★	17
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	★★★★★	39
Return Fire	Time Warner Interactive	★★★	19
Ridge Racer	Namco	★★★★	04
Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	★★	15
Risk	Hasbro	★★	45
Road Rash 3D	Electronic Arts	★★	46
Robo Pit	THQ	★★★	22
Robotron X	Midway	★★★	27
Rush Hour	Psygnosis	★★★	32
Saga Frontier	SCEA	★	43
Samurai Shodown III	SCEA	★★	25
Sentient	Psygnosis	★★★	30
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	★★	44
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	★	41
Shellshock	US Gold	★★★★	19
Shipwreckers!	Psygnosis	★★★	38
Shockwave Assault	Electronic Arts	★★	15
Sidewinder	Asmik (Japan)	★★★	18
Silverload	Vic Tokai	★★★★	18
SimCity 2000	Maxis	★★★	23
Skullmonkeys	EA	★★	40
Slam Scape	Viacom	★	26
Soul Blade	Namco	★★★★	28
Soviet Strike	Electronic Arts	★★★★	24
Space Hulk	Electronic Arts	★★★	21
Space Jam	Acclaim	★	27
Spawn: The Eternal	SCEA	★	38
Speed Racer	Jaleco	★★	42
Spider	BMG	★★★	28
Spot Goes to Hollywood	Virgin Interactive	★	24
Spyro	SCEA	★★★★	47
Star Gladiator	Capcom	★★★	24
Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi	LucasArts	★★	38
StarWinder	Mindscape	★★★	24
Steel Harbinger	Mindscape	★★★	24
Steel Reign	SCEA	★★	37
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	★★★★	35
Street Racer	Ubi Soft	★★★★	24
Suikoden	Konami	★★★★	25
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	Capcom	★★★★	29
Syndicate Wars	Electronic Arts	★★★	34
Tail of the Sun	SCEA	★★★★	31
Team Losi RC Racer	Fox Interactive	★	47
Tekken	Namco	★★★★	07
Tekken 2	Namco	★★★★★	20
Tekken 3	Namco	★★★★★	42
Tempest X	Interplay	★★★★	24
Tenchu	SCEI	★★★★	43
Ten Pin Alley	ASC Games	★★★★	27
Tennis Arena	Ubi Soft	★★	43
Test Drive 4	Accolade	★★	37
Theme Hospital	EA	★★★★	43
Thunder Truck Rally	Psygnosis	★★★	33
Thunderforce V	Working Designs/Spaz	★★	46
TigerShark	GT Interactive	★★★	29
Time Crisis	Namco	★★★★	38
TNN Hardcore 4X4	ASC	★★	26
Tobal No. 1	SCEA	★★★★	24
Toh Shin Den	Takara	★★★★	04
Tokyo Highway Battle	Jaleco	★★★	22
Tomb Raider II	Eidos	★★★★	37
Tomba	SCEA	★★★★	45
Top Gun	Spectrum Holobyte	★★	20
Toukon Retsuden	Tomy	★★★★	14
Trap Gunner	Atlus	★★★★	47
Triple Play '98	EA Canada	★★★★	31
Tunnel B1	Acclaim	★★★	25
Turbo Prop Racing	SCEA	★★★★	45
Twisted Metal	SCEA	★★★★	13
Twisted Metal 2	SCEA	★★★★	30
Vandal Hearts	Konami	★★★★	29
Vigilante 8	Activision	★★★★	45
Virtual Pool	Interplay	★★★	27
VMX Racing	Playmates Interactive Ent.	★★	36
VR Baseball '99	Interplay	★★★	46
WarGames	MGM Interactive	★★★	46
Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat	Mindscape	★★★	28
Warhawk	SCEA	★★★★	13
WCW Nitro	THQ	★★★	38
WCW Vs The World	THQ	★★	30
Wild Arms	SCEA	★★★★	32
Wing Commander IV	Electronic Arts	★★	31
Wipeout	Psygnosis	★★★★★	11
World Cup '98	EA Sports	★★★★	45
Worms	Ocean	★★★★	19
WWF Warzone	Acclaim	★★★	47
WWF Wrestlemania	Acclaim	★★★★	12
X-Com: UFO Defense	MicroProse	★★★★★	14
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	★★	40
X-Men vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	★	45
Xevious 3D/G+	Namco	★★★	31
Zero Divide	Time Warner	★★★	14

title	publisher	rating	#
Online			
Aliens Online	Kesmai	★★★	43
Command & Conquer: Sole Survivor	Westwood	★	41
Meridian 59: Revelation	3DO	★★★	37
Netstorm	Activision	★★★★	40
NetWAR	Headland	★★★	41
Tanarus	Sony	★★★★	40
Ultima Online	Origin	★★★★	37

title	publisher	rating	#
PC			
688(I) Hunter/Killer	Jane's Combat Simulations	★★★★	34
Abuse	Crack dot Com	★★★★	14
Addiction Pinball	MicroProse	★★★★	45
Afterlife	LucasArts	★★★	23
Age of Empires	Microsoft	★★★★	37
AH-64D Longbow	Electronic Arts	★★★★★	21
Air Warrior II	Interactive Magic	★★★★	31
Air Warrior III	Interactive Magic	★★★	40
Albion	Blue Byte	★★★★	23
Alien Earth	Playmates	★★★	42
Allied General	Mindscape	★★★★	18
Amber: Journeys Beyond	Graphic Simulations	★★★	27
American Civil War	Interactive Magic	★★★★	22
Andretti Racing	Electronic Arts	★★★★	39
Apache	Interactive Magic	★★★★★	11
Armor Command	Ripcord Games	★★★	43
Armored Fist	NovaLogic	★★★★	02
Army Men	3DO	★★★	44
Ascendancy	Broderbund	★★★★	12
Atlantis: The Lost Tales	Interplay	★★★	35
Azrael's Tear	Mindscape	★★★	25
Banzai Bug	Grolier	★★★	30
Battleground Waterloo	TalonSoft	★★★★	22
Battlespire	Bethesda	★★★	41
Battlezone	Activision	★★★★	42
Beast Within: A Gabriel Knight Mystery	Sierra On-Line	★★★★	17
Bedlam	GT Interactive	★★★	26
Betrayal in Antara	Sierra	★★★	34
Big Red Racing	Domark	★★★	19
Black Dahlia	Take 2 Interactive	★★	44
Blade Runner	Virgin	★★★★	39
Blood	GT Interactive	★★★★	33
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	Activision	★★	36
Broken Sword: The Smoking Mirror	Virgin Interactive	★★★	36
Buried in Time: The Journeyman Project 2	Sanctuary Woods	★★★★	13
Burnout Championship Drag Racing	Bethesda Softworks	★★★★	43
Caesar II	Sierra On-Line	★★★★	14
Capitalism	Interactive Magic	★★★★	13
Carmageddon	SCI	★★★★	33
CART Precision Racing	Microsoft	★★★★	38
Castrol Honda Superbike	Intense Simulation	★	46
Chaos Overloads	New World Computing	★★★	21
Chronomaster	Capstone	★★★★	16
Circle of Blood	Virgin	★★★★	24
City of Lost Children, The	Psygnosis	★★	32
Civilization II	MicroProse	★★★★★	19
Close Combat	Microsoft	★★	22
Colonization	MicroProse	★★★★	01
Comanche 3	NovaLogic	★★★	33
Command & Conquer	Virgin	★★★★★	12
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Virgin	★★★★	25
Conquest of the New World	Interplay	★★★	20
Creatures	Mindscape	★★★★★	35
Crusader: No Remorse	Electronic Arts	★★★★★	13
Curse of Monkey Island, The	LucasArts	★★★	39
Dark Earth	MicroProse	★★★	37
Dark Forces	LucasArts	★★★	05
Dark Reign	Activision	★★★★	38
Deadlock II	Cyberlore Studios	★★★	43
Death Drome	Viacom	★★★	29
Death Rally	Apogee Software	★★★	27
Descent	Interplay	★★★★	05
Descent II	Interplay	★★★★	18
Descent Freespace	Interplay	★★★★	45
Descent to Undermountain	Interplay	★	41
Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	★★★★	14
Diablo	Blizzard	★★★★	28
Die by the Sword	Interplay	★★★★	42
Dig, The	LucasArts	★★★★	15
Dinotopia	Turner Interactive	★★★	20
Discworld	Psygnosis	★★★	05
Discworld II: Mortality Bytes!	Psygnosis	★★★	32
Dominion: Storm Over Gift 3	Eidos	★	46
Dragon Dice	Interplay	★	35
Druid	Sir-tech	★★★★	17
Duke Nukem 3D	3D Realms	★★★★	20
Dungeon Keeper	Electronic Arts	★★★★	39
EarthSiege 2	Sierra On-Line	★★★★	20
Earthworm Jim 1 & 2	Playmates	★★★★	21
Ecstatica 2	Psygnosis	★★★★	30
EF2000 v2.0	Ocean of America, Inc.	★★★★	36
Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall, The	Bethesda Softworks	★★★★	24
Emperor of the Fading Suns	SegaSoft	★★★★	32
Excalibur 2055 A.D.	Sir Tech	★★	37
Extreme Assault	Blue Byte	★★	35
Extreme Tactics	Piranha Interactive	★★★	46
F-15	EA	★★★★	43
F-22 Lightning II	NovaLogic	★★	25
F1 Racing Simulation	Ubi Soft	★★★★	39
Fable	Sir-tech	★★★	31
Faery Tale Adventure II	Encore Software	★★	40
Fallen Haven	Interactive Magic	★★	32
Fallout	Interplay	★★★★	38
FIFA '96 Virtual Stadium Soccer	Electronic Arts	★★★★★	13
Fire Fight	Electronic Arts	★★★★	21
Flesh Feast	SegaSoft	★★★	45
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★	44
Game, Net & Match	Blue Byte	★★★	45
G.Police	Psygnosis	★★★★	38
Grand Theft Auto	Take 2	★★★★	42
Havoc	Reality Bytes, Inc.	★★★★	16
Heavy Gear	Activision	★★★	39
Heretic	Id Software	★★★★	05
Heroes of Might and Magic	New World Computing	★★★★	12
Hexen: Beyond Heretic	Id Software	★★★★	14
Hind	Interactive Magic	★★★★	25
Hyper 3-D Pinball	Virgin	★★★★	18
Icebreaker	Twentieth Century Fox	★★★	20
IF-22 Raptor	Interactive Magic	★★★	35
Imperium Galactica	GT Interactive	★★★★	33
Incoming	Rage Software	★★★★	46
Industry Giant	Interactive Magic	★★★★	45
Interactive Fiction Collections	Activision	★★★★★	10
Interstate '76	Activision	★★★★	31
Into the Void	Playmates	★★★	33
Isle of Four Winds: Rune War, The	Arcanium Productions	★★★	39
Jazz Jackrabbit 2	G.O.D.	★	45
Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	LucasArts	★★★★★	36
Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith	LucasArts	★★★★	41
Jetfighter III	Interplay	★★★★	29
Journeyman Project 3	Red Orb	★★★★	41
Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny	Westwood Studio	★★★	37
Last Bronx	Sega	★★	43
Last Express, The	Broderbund	★★★★	31
Leisure Suit Larry 7: Love for Sail	Sierra	★★★	25
Lemmings Paintball	Psygnosis	★★★	22
Lighthouse	Sierra	★★	25
Links LS	Access	★★★★	24
Lords of the Realm II	Sierra	★★★★	28
M.A.X.	Interplay	★★★★	30
M.A.X. 2	Interplay	★★★★	47
M1A2 Abrams	Interactive Magic	★★★	32
M1 Tank Platoon II	MicroProse	★★★★	43
Magestayer	GT Interactive	★★★★	37
Magic Carpet 2	Electronic Arts	★★★★	13
Magic: The Gathering	Spectrum Holobyte	★★	31
Master of Orion II	MicroProse	★★★	28
MDK	Playmates	★★★★	31
Meat Puppet	Playmates Interactive	★★★	34
MechCommander	MicroProse	★★★	46
MechWarrior 2	Activision	★★★★	10
MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	★★★★	25
Micro Machines 2	GameTek	★★★	21
Might and Magic VI	3DO Company	★★★★	44
Mission Critical	Legend Entertainment Co.	★★★★	15
Monster Truck Madness	Microsoft	★★★★	26
Monster Truck Madness 2	Microsoft	★★★	44
Monty Python and the Holy Grail	7th Level	★★	22
Moto Racer GP	BMG	★★★★★	31
Myth	Bungie	★★★★	38
Nam	GT Interactive	★	47
NASCAR Racing 2	Sierra On-Line	★★★	40
Nemesis: A Wizardry Adventure	Sir-Tech Software	★★★	27
NeoHunter	Virgin Interactive	★	27
Nevermood, The	DreamWorks Interactive	★★★	24
NHL '97	Electronic Arts	★★★★	24
Nitro Racers	3DO (Europe)	★★★★	28
Normality	Interplay	★★★	23
Obsidian	SegaSoft	★	30
Of Light and Darkness	Interplay	★★	43
Outlaws	LucasArts	★★★	32
Outwars	Microsoft	★	43
Panzer Commander	SSI	★★★★	46
Pax imperia: Eminent Domain	THQ	★★	37
Phantasmagoria	Sierra On-Line	★★★	12
Phantasmagoria: A Puzzle of Flesh	Sierra	★★★	27
Pod	Ubi Soft	★★★	31
Postal	Ripcord	★★★★	37
Powerslave	Playmates	★★	30
Prisoner of Ice	I•Motion	★★★	12
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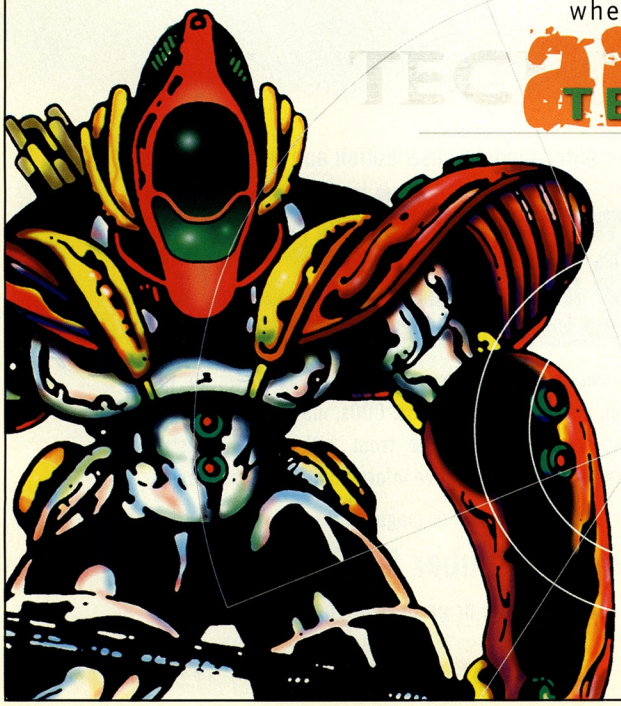
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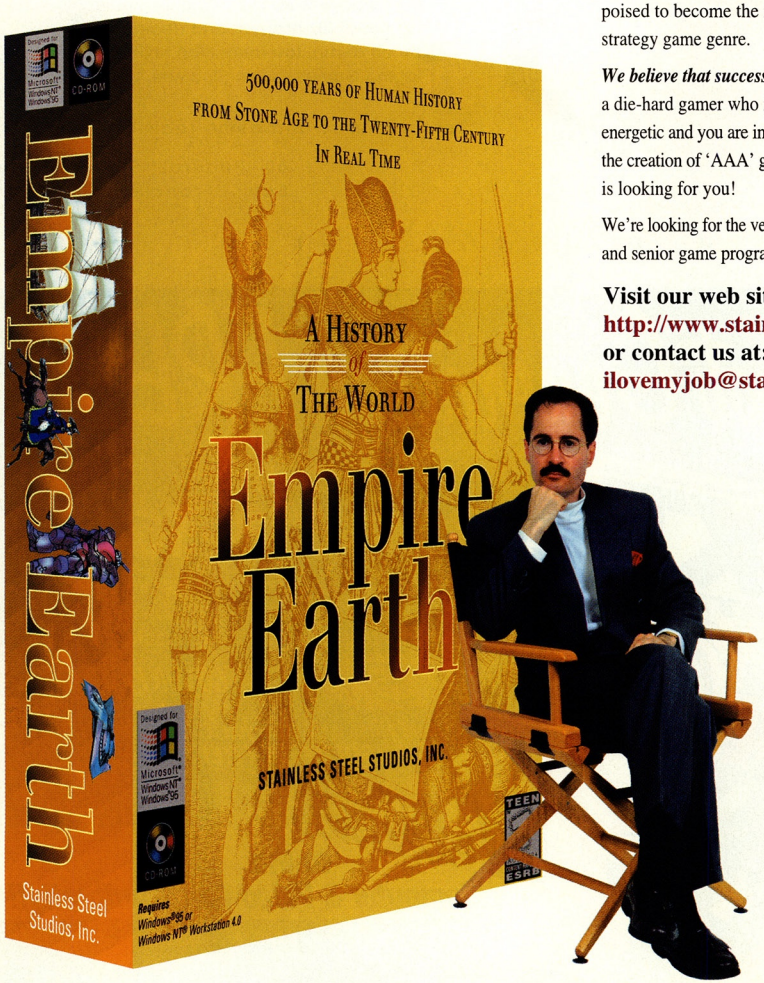
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When I was growing up, I always drew, I still draw, but now I combine time and sound.



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ENDING

Next Generation reports on the **past**

System Shock

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO?

Sinistar was actually completed for Atari 2600 and played remarkably well against the arcade version. However, the market crash in 1984 prevented the game from reaching store shelves.





In 1978, Magnavox introduced the Odyssey 2. A console system designed to compete against Atari's 2600 and Mattel's Intellivision, it never achieved the success of either competitor. One of the most notable games is *K.C. Munchkin*, the *Pac-Man*-inspired game that prompted a lawsuit between Magnavox and Atari.

The system featured a membrane keyboard and two joysticks. Magnavox later offered a speech module that plugged into the cartridge port and enabled users to play speech-compatible games. More than 40 games were released primarily by Magnavox, with only a few third parties such as Imagic lending support. Magnavox had plans to release a new system with advanced graphics and a PC-style keyboard, but it only materialized as a limited release overseas, where Odyssey was most successful.

Retroview

by **Steven Kent**, author of a forthcoming book on the history of videogames

Counterfeiters

The Japanese have a singular civilization, and that uniqueness extends to the dark side of their culture. There, organized crime operates under a veil of secrecy. The FBI and other organizations sometimes manage to crack that veil, but for the most part, few outsiders have any knowledge about underworld dealings. In America, criminal and law enforcement organizations stand in direct opposition to each other. In Japan, the Yakuza, which can loosely be described as the Japanese Mafia, apparently coexists with the law by remaining within certain boundaries.

It's not hard to locate members of the Yakuza. The Yakuza runs the Tokyo fish market and controls the concession stands at major sporting events. For years, members of the Yakuza were the only men to perm their hair, wear dark glasses, and drive black cars. And throughout the history of videogames, the Yakuza has played the recurring role of industry pirate.

The first noted appearance took place in 1976, when Namco first introduced *Breakout* in Japan. Nolan Bushnell, president of Atari, found it difficult to run a Japanese office, so he sold his operation to Namco and retained the company as his local partner. In most cases, Atari authorized Namco to build additional copies of popular games, but the company did not extend that right with *Breakout*. It only sent Namco a few copies of the game and ignored the plea of Namco's president, Masaya Nakamura, for more units.

Then, as Nakamura was trying to get more copies of *Breakout* from Atari, he noticed a strange thing happening.

"Nakamura was able to trace the counterfeits to the Yakuza. We knew exactly where the copies were being manufactured"

Masaya Nakamura, president, Namco

All of a sudden we encountered a great number of copies in the Japanese market. The game was called Borokukuishi. *It's literally the Japanese translation of* Breakout. *And we saw more copies than the original games that we were trying to distribute. It was to the detriment*

QUESTION

What Atari 2600 game featured voice samples?

Legend of Zelda

In playing Link's first adventure, now a healthy 12 years old, it's almost possible to hear the cogs whirring in Shigeru Miyamoto's brain as he sets in motion ideas that would evolve through each of the game's successors (once the awkward flirtation with side-viewed action in *Zelda II* had passed). Among these concepts are the balance of straightforward hack'n'slash gameplay with the more puzzle-orientated dungeons (a difference that, although slight in the first game, would become increasingly important); the variety of enemies, each requiring a different strategy to defeat; and the creative use of the landscape that negated the need for a huge map by making players cross back and forth, rewarding them with new secrets as the game evolved.

Moreover, it would seem that Miyamoto knew right from the beginning the sort of game *Zelda* should be — *Legend of Zelda* is in fact very similar to the classic *Link to the Past* on the SNES. In fact, had the processing power been available to Miyamoto in 1986, it's easy to imagine that the *Zelda* he would have created wouldn't have been a lot different from the *Zelda* available now on the Nintendo 64.

System	NES
Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	In-house
Released	1986



Although its graphics were rather basic, *Legend of Zelda* offered many gameplay touches to match those of its Game Boy and SNES successors

of our business.

— Masaya Nakamura

Nakamura was able to trace the counterfeits to the Yakuza.

We knew exactly where the copies were being manufactured, and I instructed my staff to go to these factories for surveillance. They would watch from their car, then they would notice a car approaching them from behind and another car coming from the front, making their car immobile. They [the gangsters] would come out of their cars and make threats.

— Masaya Nakamura

According to Nakamura, a meeting with Yakuza leaders led to a menacing proposal. They offered to make Namco the most powerful company in the videogame business. Seeing this offer as the first step in an attempt to seize control of his company, Nakamura declined.

This was not the last time that the Yakuza attempted to break into the videogame market. Several Japanese game executives tell similar stories.

In the '80s, a Yakuza clan began copying a game from Konami. Allegedly, when somoene at Konami asked for help from an old friend who had ties with a rival clan, he touched off an internal war and had to go into hiding.

Counterfeiting remains one of the biggest problems plaguing the videogame industry, though the Yakuza is seldom associated. In an industry that routinely makes as much as $16 billion annually, billions of dollars are often lost to companies that steal and copy both games and hardware. This is especially true in Asia, where it is believed that large companies are involved in counterfeiting operations and are sometimes protected by their local governments.

In January 1995, for instance, Nintendo accused Samsung Electronics of copying the hit game *Donkey Kong Country*. Nintendo managed to nip that case in the bud, but the company still spends millions of dollars trying to track and stop counterfeiters.

According to Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo of America, worldwide intellectual piracy costs Nintendo between $2.5 and $3 billion each year. While this piracy occurs more frequently in Latin America and Asia, counterfeit Nintendo products can be found in all markets, including the United States. NG

ANSWER

QUADRON by Atari. The voice repeated the title four times.

Letters

Ducking for cover

Next Generation is the only videogame magazine I subscribe to, the only one I read. The reason is simple: It's a mature, high-class production. Until now. I'll be blunt. The cover for **NG 46** is shit. The thin paper looks and feels horrible. It reminds me of an issue of *GameFan* or *EGM*. I realize that all Imagine magazines are supposed to use this cover for a folded ad (i.e., more money), but what about the quality?

As a loyal subscriber, I find this ridiculous and a stab in the back. I am paying for quality and you're handing me sweatshop junk. Although my respect for the magazine hasn't faltered in the slightest, my attitude toward Imagine, Inc., has. I will never buy another Imagine product again (other than **Next Gen**) until your error has been corrected.

Christopher Staats
La Crosse, WI

Since issue one of **Next Generation** I've been impressed with not only the quality and depth of reporting on the inside, but also the obvious pride and professionalism that is shown throughout the magazine and is best exemplified by the stiff, quality paper used as a cover.

I have never collected a magazine before; however, I am proud to have every issue of **Next Generation** displayed on my desk at work, within easy reach should I care to look back to see just how far we've come since *Virtua Fighter*, 32X, and 3DO. I also went out of my way to collect the alternate issue for **NG 37**, since as a subscriber I received the nonstandard cover that featured Mr. Carmack.

The **Next Generation** cover is durable, protective, and professionally presented, and it has a tangible quality that feels comfortable in the hands. It provides the first impression that readers will have of your magazine, and it lets them know that you mean business and that you go the extra mile to present quality.

Please reconsider the decision to go with a cheaper-quality cover. I know that I personally am willing to spend extra on your magazine, and I'm convinced that many of your readers feel the same way I do. **Next Generation** is the only magazine that I refuse to let leave my possession once it arrives — all the others go to co-workers or the recycle bin — and that is not only because of the outstanding work it contains, but also because of the excellent quality of its presentation.

Sam Posten
SW Engineer,
Ilex Systems
Adjunct Professor,
Monmouth University

Bring back the old covers!!!!

Allison Weaver
Troy, MI

The change in our cover stock has brought in the most mail in **Next Generation**'s history — more than 1,000 letters, which exceeds the outpouring after our interview with Sam Tramiel in **NG 7**.

The decision to change the cover stock was based on a company-wide policy that all magazines needed to have a gatefold ad off the front cover. This proved incompatible with our traditional cover stock. As the issue you're holding in your hands shows, however, your letters worked: The ad has been moved inside the magazine, and the thick cover is back, so it's back to the usual batches of complaints and questions.

I know for a fact no one on your staff watches professional wrestling. How do I know this, you ask? Am I psychic? No. Am I a psychotic stalker who watches every single person on your staff and knows what they watch on T.V.? Well, maybe, but the real reason I know this fact is because in **NG 47**, page 158, you made a *grave* mistake. In your review of *WWF Warzone*, you stated that Goldberg, the undefeated heavyweight champion of World Championship Wrestling (WCW) was "in the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) lineup." That is simply a false statement. This may sound stupid, but if a WCW fan thought that Goldberg was in a WWF game, he might commit suicide or at least commit himself to a mental hospital.

Mike Lawson
via email

OK, we're going to quietly set this review next to the preview in which we said that Newman Haas was part of the IRL and not CART, and then find the reviewer and strangle him. We regret the error.

In the last couple of months I've noticed an alarming trend in your Finals section: the reviewing of games not yet released to the public. How can a game get a review before it is released? I thought that was what the Alphas section of your magazine was for.

In other issues of your magazine, I've noticed final reviews of games that have been released in Japan, and I assume that you are playing final Japanese released games, which I rather enjoy reading about.

So if a game is not released to the public yet, what version are you basing your review on? Is it a beta or a gold master candidate? And if it is not a released game, what's the guarantee that it might not change during the last few days of development or during the submission process through Sony, Nintendo, or Sega? This problem really stood out in the November 1998 issue, with *Turok 2*. I am really looking forward to playing this game, and I look to



your magazine for an honest thoughtful review. But when you give an unreleased *Turok 2* five stars, I begin to question the validity of said review.

Please let me know what you think, or if I'm making a huge mistake in assuming you've always reviewed released versions of games in your Finals section.

Luigi Priore
luigi_priore@studio.disney.com

We do occasionally review gold master editions of games, which are the copies sent to manufacturing (after the game is approved by Sony or Nintendo in the case of console games), so that we can make our reviews as timely as possible.

I was planning on purchasing a Yarouze, but now I'm afraid that Sega will release a Dreamcast version. So now I don't know what to do. Should I purchase a Yarouze or should I wait and purchase the Dreamcast version (if there is one)? Also, what should I know before I get started?

Jo Eric Mercado
joe@juno.com

Sega may release a hobbyist development kit as well, but even if it happens, it won't be for a couple of years. Before you purchase a Yarouze, though, we advise you to make sure you know C well.

With the release of the Game Boy Color, is **Next Generation** going to start reviewing Game Boy Color games? It really is the "next generation" of handheld devices. Also, what games look good to you guys on the system?

Jim Wasserman
Colma, CA

Although we're pretty excited about the GBC and are fascinated by the innovations developers continue to wring out of an ancient Z-80 based system (*NFL Blitz* will have FMV), we're not planning to review GBC games. We will cover the system in Intelligence, however.

I am really interested in the product pictured in **NG 47**, page 4, where there is a high-tech computer running PSYKE. It is a Norcim, with a Letni Muitnep processor. Best of all, it's compatible with 89 Swodniw! Can you get me some product information? I'm so excited because the keyboard even has the KCOL MUN key! It's more comfortable with the numeric keypad on the left side. You're the computer gods. If you can't help me, no one can!

Chad Garrett
cgarrett@bushnell.net

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Correction:
In the October issue, page 81 ("A Question of Character"), we incorrectly identified the creator of Square's *Cloud* as Kenji Mimurao. In fact, it is Tetsuya Nomura. **Next Generation** regrets the error.

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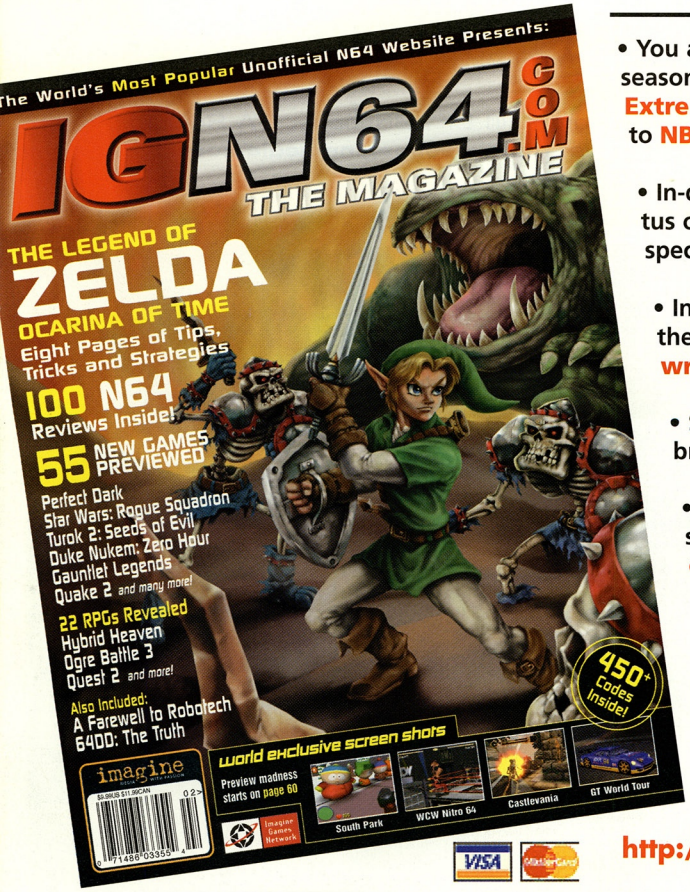
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Next Month



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